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Introduction

The 1970s were stormy years in the entire world. They saw the introduction of the so called 'détente'—a policy aiming at relaxing strain between the two world superpowers in the context of the Cold War—proposed by the American President Richard Nixon, his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the General Secretary of the soviet Communist Party Leonid Brezhnev. Yet, this decade saw also the crisis of such a policy. With Nixon's resignation, the American position in the international background became weak, thus affecting negatively the easing of tension between the USA and Moscow. To the weakening of the American power, a gradual change of direction followed the political landscape—leftist parties reached governmental position in Germany and Great Britain.

Even in Italy, the Communist Party was becoming popular, achieving a broad consensus at first in the 1975 local elections, and then in the general elections in 1976. Although the feared '*sorpasso*' did not happen, the US Administration kept supervising the Italian political situation strictly, promoting harsh measures as a stern warning against the participation of the Communists in the Italian Government and trying to involve other European countries in such provisions. Whereas Germany and France showed a total approval for the American stance during the inter-governmental meeting in Puerto Rico in 1976, Great Britain was puzzled at such an undue interference on a democratic state by other nations that were supposed to be allies.

Despite the Italian Communists were actually increasing their popularity, the worsening conditions of law and order in Italy were considered by London a more serious problem than an unlikely Red Government.

Political violence and ordinary crimes grew gradually in Italy during the decade and proved to be a peculiar case among other European countries because of its long duration, extreme violence and wide diffusion within the social fabric¹. Political violence had two different origins, which scholars tend to place in two different periods, essentially splitting the decade in two. Such a distinction could seem conventional, but a predominance of right-wing terrorism could be indeed traced during the first half of the 1970s, starting with the episode of the bomb in Piazza Fontana in Milan in 1969 and continuing with the neo-fascist bombing attack in Piazza Della Loggia in Brescia in

¹ Angelo Ventura and Carlo Fumian, *Per una storia del terrorismo italiano* (Roma: Donzelli, 2010), 3.

1974. Fascist violence went down in history as belonging to a precise plan labelled the 'strategy of tension', according to which extreme-right wing movements' activity was accepted and actually supported by the United States, in order to throw the Italian situation in turmoil, so that the last would justify an authoritarian turn to the right for the sake of domestic security.

Instead, the 'red terrorism' dominated the second-half of the decade, characterizing the period to such an extent that those years went down in history as 'years of lead', referring to the bullets shot during the ambushes by the left-wing extremists. Subversive leftist groups considerably increased over the years, counting a myriad of movements, among which forty-seven were actually active and operating².

As regards what was called the red terrorism, the Red Brigades ended up monopolizing the whole category. The Marxist-Leninist organization developed a well-organized structure—thanks also to the aid of other left-wing subversive groups—conceived in order to combine the theory of revolution and its practice. Originally committed to demonstrative acts against the Northern fabrics—such as fire destroying the fabric equipment or the circulation of subversive leaflets, exalting the armed propaganda—from 1972 the Red Brigades started their kidnapping activity. At first, their targets were business managers of the main Northern cities' fabrics, but gradually the subversive organization started going for representatives of the Italian law, journalists, till they succeeded in hitting 'the heart of the State' through the kidnapping and murder of the Italian Christian Democracy's President, Aldo Moro.

This historical event changed the course of the Italian political background. Indeed, on the 16th of March 1978, the Parliament had to express its vote of confidence for the fourth Andreotti Government, which would boast the direct participation in the majority of the Italian Communist Party for the first time since 1947—a result achieved by the close dialogue between Aldo Moro and the Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer. Although the Government received a massive vote of confidence both from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, once the Moro affair was over, the Communists started a crisis, which would lead to the fifth Andreotti Government, with the Italian Communist Party in opposition, but with the Italian Socialists supporting the executive branch.

² Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta* (Roma: Sensibili alle foglie, 1994), 25.

The dramatic event of Moro's abduction and murder by the Red Brigades showed that terrorism in Italy was a real threat. The terrorist organization could kidnap the leading representative of a democratic State and detain him for fifty-five days in the capital city, avoiding military forces and security services. They could kill him and leave his corpse in the boot of a car, parked in the halfway of the headquarters of both the Italian Communists and Christina Democrats.

The aim of this thesis work is to point out the interest of London in the situation of law and order in Italy during the whole 1970s. It was tried to reconstruct the British concern through the help of diplomatic documents, which are available in the official website 'Margaret Thatcher Foundation'³, a valuable source offering free access to numerous historical documents pertaining to the Thatcher period. Yet, official papers strictly related to terrorism date back to after 1978, thus it was possible to reconstruct the British point of view from the Moro's murder on. However, when diplomatic documents fail to give back London's perception of law and order in Italy, British newspaper articles come to aid and represent a notable source of information, offering a complete image of the attention devoted by the UK for the endurance of the democratic order in Italy.

As regards the diplomatic documents, the assistance of Professor Elena Calandri and the scholar Giulia Bentivoglio was fundamental. Scientific essays on Anglo-Italian relations during the Cold-War are available only for the period from the end of the 1940s and the 1950s. The 1970s are not fully investigated, although in this decade, European integration gives the two States the opportunity to establish close relations. The Italian academic that significantly contributed to explore such a topic is Giulia Bentivoglio, whose book 'The Two Sick Men of Europe'⁴ and essay 'Violenza endemica o eterodiretta? Il terrorismo italiano degli anni Settanta e Ottanta visto da Londra'⁵ were two fundamental guides for this thesis work.

Their similar fate as 'sick men' of the European Community is only a part of what Great Britain and Italy shared. Actually, once the UK entered the EEC—a process strongly

³ "Margaret Thatcher Foundation," accessed February 7, 2020, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/>.

⁴ Giulia Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?: Britain and Italy between Crisis and Renaissance (1976-1983)* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2018).

⁵ Giulia Bentivoglio, "Violenza Endemica o Eterodiretta? Il Terrorismo Italiano Degli Anni Settanta e Ottanta Visto Da Londra," in *Il Mondo Della Guerra Fredda e l'Italia Degli Anni Di Piombo. Una Regia Internazionale per Il Terrorismo?* (Firenze Milano: Le Monnier università Mondadori education, 2017), 205–224.

avored by the Italian Government—the two nations came together to work out some issues within the Economic Community, which they regarded unfavorable and unfair for their countries.

Hence, the first part of this thesis addresses the international background of both Italy and Great Britain during the 1970s.

The first chapter is aiming at offering the international context in which Italy moved during a decade characterized by several and different crises—tensions between Western and Arab countries, tense relations between the USA and the European Community members. Such account is conceived with the purpose of pointing out that the Italian nation had actually a significant role in the international field, despite its precarious domestic status. The overview on Italy's role as global actor outlined in the first chapter follows four points:

- East-West conflict
- European Integration
- G7
- Mediterranean and Middle-East issue

The second chapter is devised as a mirror-chapter of the first. It is referred to Great Britain and its position on the aforementioned questions, in the attempt to highlight the connections and differences between the British and the Italian stance on these themes. Such analysis' intent aims at justifying the British interest in the Italian domestic situation, and specifically its concern on the situation of law and order.

The third chapter introduces the second part of this thesis work, which address the specific theme of political violence in Italy during the years taken into consideration.

In the third chapter, an introductive section pertaining to the phenomenon of political terrorism examines the different phases, through which it went over the centuries, as well as the effort made in order to give to political terrorism an inclusive definition able to identify it among the myriad phenomena belonging to the broad category of political violence. Then, an overview of political terrorism with left-wing hallmarks in Italy is provided. The Red Brigades and their satellite groups' history is investigated in order to give an outline of their development over the years, together with the growing extent of their threat.

Finally, the last chapter aims at showing the British interest in the terrorist phenomenon in Italy, pointing out the major issues pertaining to the Italian terrorism arisen from the analysis of the British diplomatic documents together with a close examination of newspaper articles.

1 Italy in the 1970s

1.1 Introduction to the 1970s: years of economic, political and cultural changes during the early détente and its crisis ⁶

The 1970s have been years of huge importance for the world since they have experienced fundamental changes in every field of the society, from the cultural to the political and economic sphere. They witnessed a long period of protests against the established power and those virtues that it has conveyed for all the post-World War II's years.

An anti-West mood gradually spread mainly among young people and took the shape of an opposition to USA's foreign policy, effectively symbolised by the disastrous war in Vietnam, and to the capitalist system, which underwent two profound crises during the decade: the first dated back to the early 1970s, when Nixon needed to finance the War in Vietnam and quit the Bretton Woods system in August 1971, ending the convertibility of the US dollar to gold; the second shock to the global economy was caused by the increase in crude oil prices in 1973-1974, after the Yom Kippur War. A further oil shock will happen in the last years of the decade, as a consequence of the Iranian Revolution and the War between Iraq and Iran.

Western people became disenchanted with the capitalistic system, which was thought to be on the decline, conversely nations from the Third World found in the Western economic system crisis a chance to set them free from the economic subordination through their own administration of raw materials, essential to the Western economy.

Economy was not the only sphere which met a point of no return: politics as well experienced some critical times, starting from the Watergate scandal, which hit US administration in 1972 and led to Nixon's resignation in August 1974. The scandal brought serious consequences on US foreign policy, causing an isolationism stance of the superpower, which seemed to be losing the leadership of the West.

The effects of American decline in political leadership showed up in Western Europe as a change of direction towards the left as far as European governments were concerned: West Germany left-wing government dated back to 1969 when the Social-democrat Willy Brandt took office as Chancellor. In 1974 he was replaced by the SPD member Helmut Schmidt. In 1974 the Labour Party took office in Great Britain with Callaghan

⁶ Antonio Varsori, *Storia internazionale: dal 1919 a oggi* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2015), 273–279.

as Prime Minister, his government lasted till the end of the 1970s although in a precarious situation; in that same year in France, the liberal Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was elected President of the French Republic. As regards Italy, albeit Communists did not reach governmental position, they gained the 34,37% of the votes, almost five points less than the Christian Democrats, which gained the 38,71%⁷.

Moreover, the political sphere was shaken by the fall of the dictatorships in three West European countries: the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974, the restoration of the Democracy in Greece in July of the same year and the death of Franco in Spain in November 1975.

While in Europe the dictatorships disappeared, in the Arab world they strengthened themselves. It is the case of the government set up through a coup against the King Idris of Libya by young military officers headed by Muammar Gaddafi in 1969. The new Libyan leader established the Libyan Arab Republic, inspired by Nasserism. A shift to the Communism showed up also in Indochina after the Fall of Saigon in 1975, whereas not even Africa was spared by a Communist's wave: Angola and Mozambique were ruled by pro-Soviet parties, while Ethiopia was declared a one-party Communist state; but also in a variety of African countries "African socialism" was in power. While Communists were gaining ground in Western Europe and the USSR projected its power worldwide, its control was increasingly resented in the Warsaw Pact countries, even if dissent in those countries was violently repressed.

In a world where both of the super powers were experiencing difficult times, the role of Cuba increased more and more; Fidel Castro became the paladin of liberation movements and a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979.

In Latin America he inspired numerous attempts from left-wing parties and guerrilla movements to take power, nevertheless most of them were violently taken over from military dictatorship during the mid-1970s.

Albeit pacifist ideals informed the society during the 1970s, countries as Germany, France and Italy were tormented by terrorist actions led by organized groups, aiming at destabilizing their national governments. Destabilization was pursued by both right-wing and left-wing terrorists, but their final goal differed. The former's strategy was

⁷ Antonio Varsori, "Puerto Rico (1976): le potenze occidentali e il problema comunista in Italia," *Ventesimo Secolo* 7, no. 16 (2008): 106.

designed to create such an unbearable situation that a military intervention would be required in order to restore the public order and justify the establishment of a dictatorship in place of a democratic government. Left-wing terrorism, on the other hand, sought to involve masses with the purpose of overthrowing capitalist governments in favour of a Marxist-Leninist societies, entailing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Italy represented a peculiar case in this context because of the strong presence of both these kinds of terrorism. The terrorist phenomenon had international targets as well: it is the case of the Palestinians, who realized multiple international terror attacks to attract the attention of the world on the plight of the Palestinians and on their request for a state.

1.2 Italy in the East-West conflict: the Italian case

Italy in the 1970s has been a topic of studies, nonetheless the scholars' attention has focussed mainly on internal policy, economy and cultural history. What has been underestimated is its role in the international scenario during the 1970s. Indeed, it has often been regarded as a mere object of the international system instead of a subject⁸. This chapter wants to offer an overview of Italy's role as an international actor on the global issues during the decades.

The international role of Italy manifests itself in four different dimensions, that are:

- Italy in the East-West conflict
- Italy in European Integration
- Italy in G7
- Italy in the Mediterranean and Middle East issues

Regarding USA position towards Italy, during the Cold War the peninsula has always been gaining more importance because of its symbolic value: the Country hosted the largest USSR-Backed Communist Party in Western Europe, which seemed to be on the

⁸ Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria, *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War: The Underrated Ally* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

verge of winning the election and ruling the Country by democratic means, representing a dangerous precedent for the Southern flank of the Mediterranean⁹.

The focus on Italy has gradually changed its intensity and nature over those years. The major concern of US administrations has always been represented by American opposition to Communist threat. In a first phase this struggle coincided with the attempt to modernize Italy, setting up an economy and a political system informed by liberal spirit, which, according USA, could hinder the Communism spread on the Peninsula¹⁰. Nevertheless, in a second phase, coinciding with the Italian general election in 1976, this perspective changed, also because the new US administration led by Jimmy Carter intended to promote the new foreign policy model of “non-interference and non-indifference”.

On 20-21 June 1976 Italian elections showed a split in the electorate: 14.209.519 voters confirmed their support to DC, whereas 12.614.650 Italians¹¹ chose to trust Berlinguer’s PCI—strong support for the Communist party had already appeared in the local elections in 1975year, when the major cities of Torino, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples had Communist mayors or Communists in coalition government¹². The 1976 election marked a stagnation of the Socialist Party, which gained the same percentage of votes of the 1972 general election.

In 1976 the expected “overtaking” by the PCI on the ruling Christian Democrat party did not happen, but the Christian Democrats needed the support of their historical ally, the PSI, to form a government. The Psi however was experiencing a period of renewal, with the nominee as a Secretary of Bettino Craxi. Under his guidance the PSI chose not to take part in the majority, leaving the weakened DC unable to form a government. Indeed, the outcome of this election was a substantial draw between the two blocs: the left one consisting of the Italian Communist Party, the Italian Socialist Party and other few parties obtained almost the 45% of the votes. Since the electoral system was a pure party-list proportional representation, the lack of a clear majority arose the problem of

⁹ Mario Del Pero and Federico Romero, “The United States, Italy and the Cold War: Interpreting and Periodising a Contradictory and Complicated Relationship,” in *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. The Underrated Ally*, ed. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 15–33.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Dipartimento per Gli Affari Interni e Territoriali,” accessed June 10, 2019, <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=20/06/1976&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S>.

¹² Simona Colarizi, *Biografia della prima Repubblica* (Roma: Laterza, 1996).

the making up of the government. To carry out this purpose, the DC had to turn to the PCI, which guaranteed the abstention for the survival of the government¹³.

Andreotti's third cabinet, which lasted until 1978, was called the government of the "not-no confidence", since it governed thanks to the external support of all the political parties in the Parliament, except the Italian Social Movement, a neo-fascist party, the Proletarian Democracy, a far-left party, and the Radical Party.

That was a "unicolour" government, since the executive consisted of Christian Democrats, but the main institutional charges were distributed among the parties according to the votes they gained, even to Communists: Pietro Ingrao, a Communist deputy, was elected as President of the Chamber of Deputies. As regards the Prime Minister, Andreotti was elected at suggestion of Moro, who believed he could reassure the allied countries as far as Communist threat was concerned¹⁴.

The Communist scare in Italy dates back to the origin of the Cold War, but as years passed it was misunderstood more and more by the allied countries: they were too much concerned in avoiding a Communist takeover to focus their attention on the peculiarity of the Italian case. In the aftermath of the Italian local elections in 1975, the morning of the last day of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki, a meeting between the American and Italian highest offices, Ford and Moro, together with Kissinger (American Secretary of State) and Rumor (Italian Foreign Minister) took place. During this talk (which actually was a not-so-subtle confrontation), American President Ford expressed his concern about Communist presence in Italy, especially with regards to the Portuguese situation. In Moro's turn, he tried to make clear the nature of Italian Communist Party and Italian Communist voters. What mattered to Moro was make the American President aware of the PCI's distinctive essence: its moderate change, its appeal to all social classes and its autonomy from the Soviet Communist Party¹⁵. Moreover the Italian Prime Minister stressed how Christian Democrats did not undervalue their opponent and in spite of their moderate claims, DC

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Stefano Pascucci, "VII Legislatura 1976-1979," *Giulio Andreotti*, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://giulioandreotti.org/biografia/settima-legislatura-1976-1979>.

¹⁵ Umberto Gentiloni Silveri, "Gli anni Sessanta nel giudizio degli Stati Uniti: un Ponte verso l'Ignoto," in *Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta. Tra Guerra Fredda e Distensione*, ed. Agostino Giovannoli and Silvio Pons (Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro): Rubbettino Editore, 2003), 109.

did not believe in PCI's affirmative stance to NATO¹⁶. Then Moro underscored how difficult it was to refuse any political contact with the Communists, while US administration had constant meetings with the Soviet. Ford reply was bitterly harsh: "[...]The two position are incompatible. This is détente and if I meet Brezhnev it doesn't mean I elect him vice president. I can't understand how someone can't distinguish an apple from an orange"¹⁷.

Rumor endeavoured to moderate the talk and asked for a recognition of the international role of Italy, persisting in demanding a permanent invitation of Italy in the four powers' summits¹⁸.

The Communist issue is interpreted by the US administration through a standpoint taking into account the crisis DC was undergoing: a Memorandum by the CIA titled "Italy: the political-economic scene in early 1976"¹⁹ contained a whole paragraph dealing with the internal conflict the Christian Democracy was going through. The party was split into two branches represented by Benigno Zaccagnini (elected as National Secretary of the Christian Democracy with a few votes gap) and Arnaldo Forlani, Minister of Defence. The two representatives embodied divergent stance of looking at the PCI: according to Zaccagnini, DC had to negotiate with Italian Communists as far as practical issues were concerned; on the other hand Forlani put forward ideological preconditions, which couldn't be overtaken²⁰. Albeit Zaccagnini's position proved to be the winning one at the 13th party congress in 1976, his wing would have always had to confront the branch refusing any dialogues with the PCI.

Only few days after the Italian general election, a meeting between some Italian-American Associations and the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (NSA) taking place in the White House revealed a contradictory management of the Italian situation: while they declared a no-interference position in Italian domestic policy, on the other hand they claimed that a government with a Communist participation would contrast with NATO's principles²¹.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 112.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 115–116.

The Communist issue was the topic of a conference between the USA and the three major European countries in occasion of the Puerto Rico Summit, which was held in June 27 and 28 1976, on the initiative of the US administration.

Out of concern about the crisis the V Moro's Cabinet was undergoing in early 1976, mainly due to the lack of support by PSI, Kissinger wrote a letter to the two leading exponents of the Socialists in Europe: Willy Brandt, the president of the Socialist International, and Harold Wilson, at that time Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The US Secretary of State affirmed that interactions with Communists were conceivable only under the NATO shield and only with the Soviets. He included in the letter to Wilson a comment on the Italian case, since he was worried that the Italian Socialist Party would not support the Christian Democracy anymore²². Kissinger's main concern was the possibility that PCI could absorb the whole left, thus he asked Wilson to endeavour to influence in some way PSI²³.

The original input to the organization of the meeting was given as an answer to Ford, who had been worried by an alarming report on Italian economic situation by the economist Alan Greenspan. The latter suggested to gather a meeting, even if they had no idea of how Western Countries could help Italy. The purpose was to influence, if not the election at least the making of the government²⁴. After preliminary meetings not always characterized by mutual consent, the Puerto Rico summit was set up: its official schedule included the global economic scene and North-South issues; Italian debt and eventual economic aids were on a side programme, which the parts chose to discuss in a preliminary meeting on the first day morning²⁵.

USA, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Deutschland and France proposed not only the exclusion of the Communists from government but also economic measures, aimed at a change in tackling the major structural problems of Italian economy and society: deficit spending, social inequalities, tax evasion, increasing criminal acts²⁶.

²² Varsori, "Puerto Rico (1976)," 93–94.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 98.

²⁵ Ibid., 102–104.

²⁶ Federico Romero, "L'Italia nell'era della Globalizzazione," September 13, 2012, <http://www.sissco.it/download/attivita/ROMERO.pdf>.

1.3 Italy in European Integration

When it comes to European Integration in the 1970s, traditional historiography considered the decade as a lost period, pointing to some crucial causes: the failure of the “snake in the tunnel”, that is the attempt to limit fluctuations between the different European currencies; the decay of USA started from the Watergate scandal, the economic crisis following the Yom Kippur war and later the crisis of détente²⁷. More recent historiography sees the 1970s as decisive years in Europe, exactly for the reasons that pushed the main European countries to react.

The launch of a European monetary policy, which saw as its greatest achievement the entering into force of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979 as a natural development of the “snake in the tunnel”, was one of the steps European Community made towards the aim of complete integration. A further development in this direction was the formalisation in 1974 of the European Council, a body of the heads of State or government of the European Community member states. First appeared in 1961, gained an official shape in 1974 but was legally recognized only with the Treaty on European Union in 1992²⁸. The European Council in 20 September 1976 scheduled the direct election of the European Parliament through the universal suffrage²⁹, making a forward step towards a reduction of the ‘democratic gap’.

During the 1970s, EC enlarged by accepting Denmark, Ireland and United Kingdom in 1973; moreover, the crisis in the Mediterranean flank, with the fall of the great colonels, Salazar’s dictatorship in Portugal and the death of Franco in Spain, represented a chance for European Community to broaden its borders³⁰.

As a consequence of the entrance of the United Kingdom in the European Community, the Lomé Convention was signed, an agreement regarding trade and aid between European Economic Community and seventy-one African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries.

²⁷ Antonio Varsori, “La questione europea nella politica italiana,” in *Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta*, ed. Agostino Giovagnoli and Silvio Pons (Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro): Rubbettino Editore, 2003), 331.

²⁸ Giuseppe Tesauro, *Diritto dell’Unione europea* (Padova: CEDAM, 2012), 28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁰ Anonymous, “La Storia Dell’Unione Europea,” Text, *Unione Europea*, last modified June 16, 2016, accessed June 21, 2019, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_it.

A further success was an enlargement of the Community competences through the establishment of the European Social Fund (ESF) and of the European Regional Development Fund (ERF) in 1975.

As far as Italian position is concerned, historians used to hold the peninsula more as a mere object of European policies than as an active actor of the integration process. Nevertheless, academics have recently proposed a different perspective, recognizing three distinct phases of Italian activity in European context³¹: in the first period, from 1969 to 1973, Italy was an active supporter of the enlargement process especially with regards to United Kingdom, seen as a valuable counterweight to the power of the German Federal Republic and France.

Other Communitarian issues appeared to be problematic for Italy. First of all the introduction of the Value added tax (VAT) approved in 1970, aiming at harmonizing the tax system in order to finance the European communitarian budget. Italian governments delayed its introduction both for political reasons and for the inefficiency of the Public administration. Moreover, serious difficulties were caused by the report drafted by a group of experts led by Pierre Werner about the irreversible fixing of the rate exchange and the introduction of a single currency within ten years. Italy welcomed the economic and monetary union, albeit there were not few detriments for the Italian State. Italy feared that a monetary union could lead to capital flows to more developed countries inside the Community, increasing regional gaps. In regards to the tax harmonization system, Italy feared the possible increment of fiscal pressure. And the Bank of Italy opposed the irreversibly fixed exchange rate regime and was willing to maintain a floating exchange rates regime till a full complete Economic and Monetary Union was established³².

Besides, differing points of view between the Community and Rome depended on social and political reasons. For instance, it was an essential matter for the nation finding a solution for the Mezzogiorno, which was thought to be a charge to be taken by the whole Community. For this purpose, Italy assumed a main role in the promotion of the first tripartite Conference, in which Ministers of Labour from the six State members and representatives of the Commission and of the major trade unions met in order to discuss

³¹ Varsori, "La questione europea nella politica italiana."

³² Ibid., 337.

social reforms in the European context³³. Donat-Cattin denounced the lack of Community social policies and he sided with trade unions' proposal of employment policies to be promoted within EEC³⁴. The Tripartite Conference and the role played by Italy bolstered the creation of a permanent Employment Committee and a reform of the European Social Fund.

Thus, Italy was insisting on a wake-up call that could make European Community shoulder the fundamental mission of being the supporter of regional policies; nonetheless, not all the State Members held this matter as essential for the Community in those years. Indeed, actions towards this direction were taken only since 1973, when the Great Britain's entrance in the European Community made that regional policies were taken seriously into consideration.

In the two-year period going from 1972 to 1973, Italian role in the Community faltered: albeit the Nation adopted the "snake in the tunnel" system, it quit it only a year after its stipulation (following Great Britain and Ireland). The following two-year period was a difficult time for the Country, mainly because of the energy—due to the Yom Kippur war—and the political crises, which led to violent social unrests.

Following the energy crisis the EEC, proved to be a weak entity, especially in face of economic problems, which were often discussed in private meetings between the four major western countries (USA, UK, German Federal Republic and France), excluding Italy even when it was concerned.

Nonetheless, if the interest in the European integration process seemed to weaken among other State members, it played a fundamental function within Italian domestic policy. Indeed, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) exploited integration for ready to take part to governmental decisions. Its position moved from a blunt rejection of Italy's membership in the EEC, accused to be only an instrument of US foreign policy, to a sincere commitment to the Community, which was now regarded as an institution where improvement should be promoted in favour of the working class³⁵. PCI's choice

³³ Maria Eleonora Guasconi, "L'Altra Europa: Le Politiche Della Cisl e Della Uil Nei Confronti Del Processo Di Integrazione Europea Negli Anni Settanta," in *Fra Mercato Comune e Globalizzazione Le Forze Sociali Europee e La Fine Dell'Età Dell'Oro*, ed. Ilaria Del Biondo, Lorenzo Mechi, and Francesco Petrini (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011), 56.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Varsori, "La questione europea nella politica italiana," 343.

towards a pro-European stance was made clear in 1979, when the Italian Communist Party welcomed Altiero Spinelli as a candidate to the first European direct election.

Italian participation to the European Community's activities was held as fundamental also by other Italian parties; among them, the Italian Republican Party (PRI), whose Secretary Ugo La Malfa firmly believed that European integration and austerity measures could represent the solution to the economic crisis affecting the peninsula; nonetheless, such a measure needed the support of both the PCI and the trade unions, since the so called "politica dei redditi" was possible only with their support³⁶.

1.3.1 The European Monetary System (EM): Italy's position

A further paramount aspect of the European integration process was the establishment of the European monetary system (EMS) in 1979, regarded the first significant step towards the European economic and monetary union³⁷. The idea of EMS came up to West-German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as an answer to USA's pressure on West Germany to take on the role of "locomotive" of the European recovery process. The German Chancellor aimed at creating a monetary stability zone in Europe, as the one guaranteed in the 1950s and 1960s by the Bretton Woods system; indeed, he devised a system similar to Bretton Woods: the European monetary stability zone would have a European Monetary Fund (EMF) comparable to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose funds were provided by all member States³⁸. Schmidt advanced his proposal during the meeting of the European Council at Copenhagen in April 1978; he chose to discuss this subject in intergovernmental negotiations that he expected to be more favourably and productive³⁹. The preparatory steps were managed secretly by a committee appointed by the leaders of West-Germany, Great Britain and France. Italy was not involved in the preliminary phase of the project; despite the irritation, the Italian Prime Minister Andreotti had to agree, but tried to impose conditions: during the EEC meeting in Bremen, Andreotti asked for some measures aimed at aiding disadvantaged nations⁴⁰. Nevertheless, EMS negotiations coincided with a gloomy

³⁶ Ibid., 345.

³⁷ Paul R. Krugman and Maurice Obstfeld, *Economia internazionale* (Pearson Italia S.p.a., 2007), 307.

³⁸ Edmund Dell, "Britain and the Origins of the European Monetary System," *Contemporary European History* 3, no. 1 (1994): 2.

³⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁰ Giuseppe Mammarella and Paolo Cacace, *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea (1926-2013)* (Roma etc.: GLF editori Laterza, 2013), 182.

period for Italy, because of DC's secretary Aldo Moro's kidnapping and murder, which made the country fall into chaos and forced the PCI to vote for the new government established on 16 March 1978, the very same day of the BR's attack to Christian Democracy's President.

Andreotti had to take into account diverging stances among and inside the parties and other institutions, as Bankitalia. Eurosceptic members of the PCI and PSI strongly opposed the EMS, since it was believed to strengthen the German-French leading role in the EEC and to represent a detriment for weaker social classes; regarding the Italian Central Bank, the Governor believed that Italian economy was still too weak; moreover, he feared that EMS, as it was conceived, could have forced Bankitalia to submit its power to the new system⁴¹. Furthermore, the Government's attitude was influenced by the drafting of the three-year plan by the then Minister of Finance Filippo Maria Pandolfi, who confirmed that EMS was possible only if it involved policies on three fields of action, i.e. the exchange rate mechanism, the European Monetary Fund and measures in favour of weak economies⁴².

Although over the negotiations the lira was allowed wider exchange rate margin, the Italian government took time to mull over the adhesion. Andreotti feared the loss of PCI's support, which was essential for the government's survival. This was the reason that brought Italy not to adhere to the EMS at the European Council meeting in early December 1978; it did it few days later. Italy accepted to join the European Monetary System thanks to the votes of DC, the Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI), the Italian Liberal Party (PLI), the Italian Republican Party (PRI), the Italian Social Movement (MSI); the PSI abstained and, most important, the PCI voted against the system, placing itself again in the opposition⁴³. A capital role in changing the government's position was played by the President of PRI, Ugo La Malfa, who in an interview published on 7th December in the Italian newspaper "Corriere della Sera" made adhesion to the European monetary system a condition for the continuation of his party's support to the government⁴⁴. In the same day (only two days after the decisive

⁴¹ Varsori, "La questione europea nella politica italiana," 347.

⁴² Filippo Maria Pandolfi, "Intervento Camera Dei Deputati 10 Ottobre 1978," in *SMEorie Della Lira: Gli Economisti Italiani e l'Adesione al Sistema Monetario Europeo* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2004), 39.

⁴³ Varsori, "La questione europea nella politica italiana," 347.

⁴⁴ Lorenzo Mechi and Antonio Varsori, *L'Europa di Ugo La Malfa: la via italiana alla modernizzazione, 1942-1979* (Milano: F. Angeli, 2003), 186.

meeting in Bruxelles) La Malfa wrote an article on “La Voce Repubblicana”, and dismissed to the Italian objections to EMS, which, he thought, was unjustifiably influenced by Great Britain’s stance⁴⁵. In the article, the PRI President stressed the numerous differences existing between the Peninsula and the English Island, pointing out both British widespread hostility to European integration and the rigorous economic policy Great Britain had led⁴⁶. The Italian government, that was refusing the Pandolfi’s plan, jeopardized the economic recovery of the country. Not joining the EMS would have made Italy run the risk of international isolation⁴⁷.

Despite resistances, EMS entered into force on 13 March 1979; Italy and Ireland (whose will was to refuse the agreement, siding with Great Britain) joined the initial six countries: Germany, France, Denmark and the Benelux.

Beyond the economic consequences, Italy’s participation to the European Monetary System was meaningful for many reasons: it strengthened the bond that linked Italy to the West-Europe system in a context characterised by the gradual end of the détente, materialized with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979; in the domestic field, it meant the end of the government of ‘national unity’, and the Italian Communist Party went back the opposition rank. It was the beginning of the gradual PCI isolation, which would have lasted till the end of the 1980s.

1.3.2 Towards the universal suffrage of the European Parliament: the Italian stance

Integration was pursued in the institutional field, as well. The EC meeting held in Paris in 1974 represented the starting point for the path towards a direct election of the European Parliament. It has been noticed that this decision actually did not mean a step towards a federalist realization of the European Community– that same day the formalization of the European Council, a confederal body, was approved– rather an attempt to involve parties in the decision making process regarding the European Integration⁴⁸. For this purpose, groups of European political parties were conceived, having common political platforms. In the period between 1974 and 1976 three groups

⁴⁵ Ibid., 185.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Sergio Pistone, *L’Italia e l’unità europea: dalle premesse storiche all’elezione del parlamento europeo* (Torino: Loescher, 1982), 337–338.

were set up: the Confederation of Socialist parties of the European Community⁴⁹, the Federation of Liberal and Democrat Parties in Europe⁵⁰ and the European People's Party⁵¹.

The direct election of the European Parliament represented a pivotal moment for Europe, since it gave European people the opportunity to choose Members of Parliament with representativeness and make them truly representative of people's opinion; more important, this representativeness regarded international relations, a matter that used to be a prerogative of diplomats and military officers⁵².

Regarding this subject, Italian position has always been coherent over the years, showing a support of the European Integration to be realized according to federalist principles. Since the early 1970s, Italian government understood that a solution for the domestic crisis could be sought in a European context, which however had to be renewed. Italian interest in a more democratic Community was already clear in 1969, when the Italian/English governments agreed on a declaration stating the importance of economic and political integrations walking at the same pace, together with the need of a directly elected Parliament⁵³. Nevertheless, this declaration had no actual effects and five more years passed for an effective step forward. During the meeting, Italy proved a firm commitment to remove any obstacles that impeded to reach this achievement. Italian pledge to elect the European Parliament by universal suffrage continued in the following European Councils: on the 1st and 2nd December 1975, it was finally reached a decision to fix the elections in May and June 1979, overcoming English and Danish resistance⁵⁴; in the European Council meeting held on the 12th and 13th July in Brussels the number of chairs was decided: Italy gained the same number of France, Great Britain and West Germany⁵⁵. In this instance, Andreotti expressed satisfaction, regarding a decision able to fulfil both the proportionality principle and the

⁴⁹ "Party of European Socialists | Political Party, Europe," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Party-of-European-Socialists>.

⁵⁰ "Origins and Development of the ALDE Party," *ALDE Party*, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.aldeparty.eu/about/history>.

⁵¹ EPP-European People's Party, "History," *EPP - European People's Party*, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://www.epp.eu/about-us/history/>.

⁵² Pistone, *L'Italia e l'unità europea*, 340.

⁵³ Bino Olivi, *Da Un'Europa All'altra*. ((Milano): ETAS Compass, 1973), 113–114.

⁵⁴ "1975_dicembre_rome_it_Pdf," n.d., 5, accessed June 24, 2019, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20807/1975_dicembre_rome_it_pdf.

⁵⁵ Society of American Archivists and Library of Congress, eds., *Encoded Archival Description tag library, version 2002*, EAD technical document no. 2 (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2002), 1.

representation's⁵⁶. After the approval of the Council of the Brussels Act on 20th September 1976, Italy ratified it on 24th March 1977⁵⁷. The quick ratification together with a high turnout⁵⁸ at the elections in June 1979 were the expression of a desire to participate.

1.4 The G7: its beginning and Italian efforts to be part of the members

The 1970s were years of struggle for Italy, since its role within the international arena had constantly to be negotiated. The economic negotiations were the most difficult field in which the Peninsula had to rise its voice, particularly because of the difficult period the European Community, together with the Western World, was going through.

The urge for common economic decisions was felt by the French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who promoted a meeting to be held between the four major Western countries upon economic issues. The main subject the French President wanted to discuss was the restoration of the fixed exchange rates, that is the Bretton Woods system. Nevertheless, US administration did not support the French suggestion, considered to be an interference in US domestic policies⁵⁹. This notwithstanding, France and West-Germany kept insisting on a joint action to tackle the economic problems the West was going through. Helmut Schmidt finally found a reason that raised the interests of the US administration: in a meeting held in Bonn at the end of July 1975 between the German Chancellor and the American President joined by Kissinger, the first stressed the consequences that a lack of common decisions would have had for the democratic order. He referred also to Italy that: "The political effects of the recession—really a depression—threaten political stability in several countries—Italy, where the Christian Democrats may accept the Communists in government"⁶⁰.

At the end, these political reasons stroke a chord in the US administration, whose actual concern regarded more economic matters than the safeguard of the democratic system;

⁵⁶ Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993* (Bari; Roma: Laterza, 1998), 233.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Pistone, *L'Italia e l'unità europea*, 347.

⁵⁹ Marinella Neri Gualdesi, "Under a Multinational Mantle: Italy's Participation in the G7 (1975–76)," in *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War: The Underrated Ally*, ed. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria, Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 71.

⁶⁰ FRUS, 1973-1976, vol. XXXI, Foreign Economic Policy, doc. 94, Memorandum of Conversation, Bonn, 27 July, 311, in M. Neri Gualdesi, *Under a Multinational Mantel*, p. 71.

indeed the USA was worried to be isolated, due to the negotiations Europe was conducting with the countries of the Third World, e.g. the Lomé Convention and the Great Britain trade deals was undertaking on raw materials within the Commonwealth⁶¹. On that occasion, Schmidt expressed not only concern for Italy, but also the will to have the latter among the countries participating to the meeting⁶². On the contrary, France's opinion was to involve the five major powers, whose finance ministers belonged to the so-called Library Group, that is USA, Great Britain, France, West-Germany and Japan. Thus, Italy's participation to the economic summit had not to be taken for granted, since the Italian situation was the worst among Western industrialized powers because of combined factors, e.g. instability in both political and monetary fields, terrorism and the rising unemployment index⁶³. In spite of its weak position in the economic area, Italy pressured France showing its disappointment for not having been involved in the quadripartite meeting, expected for the end of July in Helsinki. In that difficult time, according to Foreign Minister Rumor, being excluded from decisional summits would have damaged Italy's reputation, causing serious domestic and international consequences. Italian government held Italy's participation in the economic cooperation between Western countries to be of fundamental importance, Prime Minister Moro and Foreign Minister Rumor sent Raimondo Manzini, the secretary general of the Italian Foreign Ministry, making allied countries aware of the consequences an exclusion of Italy would bring on the legitimacy of Moro's government⁶⁴. Manzini led secret talks in USA, Great Britain and France, making useful personal friendships: in the end he succeeded in gaining the decisive support of the English Foreign Secretary Callaghan, who convinced Kissinger to support the Italian cause⁶⁵. Finally, thanks to Manzini's diplomatic work, Italy gained its admission to the Rambouillet summit. This success was of pivotal importance since it guaranteed to the Peninsula the membership in the top group, which it certainly could not have belonged to, if its participation would have come later⁶⁶. What finally convinced the French President and the other four heads of State and government was not the economic significance of Italy, but the political

⁶¹ Neri Gualdesi, "Under a Multinational Mantle," 71–72.

⁶² Ibid., 72.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, 264–266.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

situation that become obvious after the local elections of the 15th June 1975, which showed an alarming victory of the PCI in many major Italian cities⁶⁷.

Italy had not only to fight for its presence to the monetary summit but also to define the nature of it, since it was tried to link Italian participation with the rotating presidency of the EEC Council, which the country would have been in charge starting from the second semester of 1975⁶⁸. This meant running the risk of not being invited to the following meetings, that's the reason that brought Italian diplomacy to abandon the initial attempt to promote Italian participation taking advantage of its leading role in the EEC Council. As already mentioned, Great Britain played a critical role for the positive outcome of the controversy, supporting Italian participation—as a country and not as the President of the Council—to the preparatory meeting to be held in New York in October, as well as to the monetary summit of Rambouillet. This change of mind from Great Britain was interpreted by French diplomacy as an attempt to widen the agenda. Indeed, because of their competence in finance and economics, Giscard and Schmidt would have probably monopolized the conference: opening up to Italy, would have meant expand the subject also to economic and commercial issues⁶⁹. In the end, because of pressures exerted from the US and British administrations, Giscard allowed Italy to be part of the group. The summit finally took place in the castle of Rambouillet on 15-17 November 1975 and involved the President of the French Republic Giscard d'Estaing, the US President Ford, the British Prime Minister Wilson, the Italian Prime Minister Moro, the West-German Chancellor Schmidt and the Prime Minister of Japan Takeo Miki. In his speech, President Moro pointed out some solutions which, he thought, could tackle the recession problem: an opening of the markets that should be reached by avoiding restrictive trade policies, a liberalisation of agricultural products, a fairer trade of industrial goods⁷⁰. Furthermore, he expressed his opinion on the East-West issues, declaring that economic relations should be build according to the détente background⁷¹. As far as monetary stability was concerned, he claimed his agreement with the French

⁶⁷ Sergio Romano, *Guida alla politica estera italiana* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1993), 170–171.

⁶⁸ Mammarella and Cacace, *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea (1926-2013)*, 173.

⁶⁹ Neri Gualdesi, "Under a Multinational Mantle," 78.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

point of view regarding the need of a more stable monetary system, but he explained that in those difficult times for Italy, the country required more flexibility⁷².

Albeit the six did not succeed in setting up a common action to face the international economic crisis—on this purpose, the main success was the agreement between USA and France, regarding the responsibility of the central banks on preventing anomalous fluctuations in exchange rates⁷³—the Rambouillet summit represented the outset of a phase characterised by a willingness to undertake concerted actions in economic matters⁷⁴. Indeed, the next meeting among the major industrialized countries was organized a year later under USA's boost, this time with the involvement of Canada, which had been excluded in 1975 by Giscard. Like in Rambouillet, Italy was an issue at the Puerto Rico summit, mainly due to the economic crisis Italy was going through because of the depreciation of the lira—which shared this faith with the British pound—and the lack of capitals provided to the country by privates in the international economic market⁷⁵. What triggered the wake-up call for the President Ford was a document on the Italian economic situation drafted by the economist and Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Alan Greenspan⁷⁶. The main three Western Country—France, West Germany and Great Britain— did not welcome the proposal enthusiastically: the French did not agree on American will to widen the agenda of the meeting to take into account political issues. Callaghan feared repercussions on Great Britain, in case the summit discussed economic concerns⁷⁷. West Germany, on the contrary, seemed to be favourable to a meeting that could prove Western countries had taken the right path on economic matters⁷⁸, but made Italian participation dependence on the result of Italian elections: in case of a Communist defeat, West Germany pushed for a loan granted by IMF instead of EEC⁷⁹. Economic arguments were, thus, strictly linked to political considerations. Indeed, according to the English authorities the meeting was actually an American attempt to prove the Ford government's leadership in view of the impending

⁷² Ibid., 82.

⁷³ Ibid., 83.

⁷⁴ Varsori, *Storia internazionale*, 305.

⁷⁵ FRUS, 1973-76, vol. XXXI, doc. 132, Memorandum From Secretary of the Treasury Simon to the Economic Policy Board, the International Monetary Situation, Washington, undated, 470, in M. Neri Gualdesi, *Under a Multinational Mantel*, p. 84.

⁷⁶ Varsori, "Puerto Rico (1976)," 98.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁷⁹ Neri Gualdesi, "Under a Multinational Mantle," 85.

American elections⁸⁰. Moreover, aid to Italy seemed to be available by the Four only if a participation of the Communists in government was excluded⁸¹.

After the Christian Democrats won the elections with only a little advance on the Communist Party, the primary aim became to avoid Communists presence in a coalition government. In the preliminary meeting held in the morning of 27th June in Puerto Rico, USA, France, West Germany and Great Britain discussed about actions to be undertaken. France strongly opposed a Communist participation in the government and suggested to link any aid to the acceptance from Italy of an economic plan conceived and agreed by the Four in a further meeting to be held on 8th July in Paris⁸². Giscard was seeking to avoid an IMF loan unless strict conditions were imposed to Italian economic policy. The French President believed this could represent a dangerous precedent for developing countries and German chancellor agreed, reaffirming the need of conditions to help Italian government approve severe policy before its Parliament and public opinion⁸³. As a French ambassador predicted, in the aftermath of Puerto Rico what actually happened was a paradox: the imposition from the “Big Four” of severe conditions on Italian economic policy made impossible to Andreotti government to resort to PCI participation⁸⁴, since the involvement of social parts was requested.

⁸⁰ Varsori, “Puerto Rico (1976),” 98.

⁸¹ Neri Gualdesi, “Under a Multinational Mantle,” 88.

⁸² Varsori, “Puerto Rico (1976),” 106–109.

⁸³ Neri Gualdesi, “Under a Multinational Mantle,” 90–92.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

1.5 The Middle East issue in the Italian Foreign Policy: a failed attempt to lead an independent action towards Arabic regions

The Mediterranean together with the Middle East region represented a critical topic for the European continent—and more generally for the West. Its significance traced back to both security and economical observations: the first were linked to the vicinity of these lands, so that disorder in those areas would have meant a direct involvement of Europe, whereas the latter were due to the role those lands had as far as supply of crude oil was concerned⁸⁵. Intervention in these territories were not regulated by a common international—or even only European—policy, so that individual—at times even opposing—mediations were led. As far as Italian action was concerned, a conflicting stance characterized the Mediterranean policy of the Peninsula⁸⁶.

In the early 1970s, Italian efforts to carry an effective Mediterranean policy were made clear by the numerous relations the current Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, Aldo Moro, established in the North of the African continent as well as in some regions of the Middle East. Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt on the African side, Turkey, Israel and Iran on the Middle East front were the countries with whom Italy was leading diplomatic affairs. From this talks, it started to take shape the idea of a conference similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which would have had as aim the peacekeeping and the economic-social development of these areas⁸⁷. Italian concern on this topic found a reason on its will to compensate for Italy's lack of effective influence as far as the international field was concerned; in addition, it mirrored a hidden strategy, which consisted in creating friendly relations with those countries beyond the Mediterranean sea⁸⁸. Moreover, it must be taken into account the Western countries' dependence on the petrol from those regions.

Moro's efforts were directed to create an Arab-Italian cooperation through diplomatic and business relations mainly with five nations of that area⁸⁹:

- the Egypt of Al-Sadat, which was a pivotal partner thanks to its contacts with both Arabs and Israel;

⁸⁵ Elena Calandri, "Il Mediterraneo nella politica estera italiana," ed. Agostino Giovagnoli and Silvio Pons, *Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta* (2003): 351.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 352.

⁸⁷ Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, 266–268.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 269.

- the Iraq of Hasan Al-Bakr, whose strategic importance came from its petrol;
- Algeria, with whom Italy was leading negotiations about the building of the Trans-Mediterranean Pipeline, which was meant to supply Italy with alternative energy;
- Libya, which represented an extremely difficult partner as soon as Gaddafi seized power in a coup; indeed, a year later, in 1970, he ordered the expropriation of properties belonging to Italian settlers in Libya, sanctioning their expulsion⁹⁰;
- Saudi Arabia, whose relevance derived from its crude oil and its relationships with USA.

Nevertheless, the establishment of a cooperation between the two worlds in those years meant a firm stance regarding the Palestinian issue, to which the previously mentioned countries were committed. Placing oneself on the side of the Arabs meant embracing the Palestinian cause, on the contrary supporting Israel would have implied the risk of a penalisation concerning the petrol supplies. In this respect, the measures Arabic countries took in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War are significant. After an initial sever cut on petrol exportations, during the Algiers Summit Conference held in November 1973, its members made a list of friend and enemy countries, which was meant to give guidelines about the different supplies of petrol addressed to those nations according their support or opposition to the fulfilment of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242⁹¹. Italy was unexpectedly excluded from both categories, despite its efforts to accomplish OPEC's requests during that year, in order to gain some profits in the petrol supplies⁹².

Albeit Italian parties showed divergent opinions regarding position Italy had to adopt in the aftermath of the Kippur War—Christian Democrats were still on their “equidistance” opinion, whereas the Socialist and the Republican party shared a prevalent pro-Israeli stance, on the other hand Communists were on the Palestinian side⁹³— the government kept on asking for the withdraw of Israel and the recognition of Palestinian rights

⁹⁰ Christopher Seton Watson, “La Politica Estera Della Repubblica Italiana,” in *La Politica Estera Italiana, 1860-1985*, ed. Sergio Romano, by R. J. B. Bosworth (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 356.

⁹¹ Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, 270.

⁹² Seton Watson, “La Politica Estera Della Repubblica Italiana,” 355.

⁹³ Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, 270–271.

according to the Resolution 242⁹⁴. Evident signs of Italy siding with Palestinian cause were its refusal to grant USA NATO bases placed in Italy during the Kippur War and its approval for Arafat's taking part to the debate on the Palestinian issue promoted on the occasion of UN General Assembly—which would take place on 13th November 1974⁹⁵. Nonetheless, these expressions of support were contradicted by an ambiguous behaviour exemplified by Italian abstention during the vote held in the General Assembly regarding the status of Palestinian people, together with the improvement of both Arab and American relationships, both of them aiming at developing an energy policy⁹⁶. Such a stance of the country was symptomatic of the lack of direction Italian policy on Mediterranean and Middle-East regions suffered from; a policy, which was actually an array of attempt mainly—if not exclusively—based on an economic logic.

Between 1973 and 1974, a slight progress on the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was made: agreements involving Israel with the Arabic countries of Egypt and Syria were concluded under the supervision of USA; again, it was the decisive action of United States that provided a solution to the conflict through bilateral negotiations, while the European Community proved to be disorganized⁹⁷. Aware of their weakness, the European members endeavoured to promote a community policy on the Mediterranean that could be independent from USA but not necessarily contrasting. This attempt corresponded to the promotion of the Euro-Arab dialogue, whose first meeting took place on 31th July 1974, between representatives of both the European Community and the Arab League, i.e. the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Sauvagnargues, who was also the President of the European Council, together with the President of the European Commission Ortolí on one hand, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait and President of Arabic League Sheikh Sabah Al-Jaber and its General Secretary Mahmoud Riad on the other⁹⁸. In this context they discussed the overall structure the cooperation work had to take, devising firstly a permanent General Commission consisting of representatives of the twenty-nine governments involved, then a commission that was in charge of evaluating sectors where the cooperation between the two parts could be realized, and finally a ministerial conference that had to

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 271–273.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Silvio Labbate, *Illusioni mediterranee: il dialogo euro-arabo* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2016), 40.

approve and sign the cooperation agreements prepared from the before mentioned organs⁹⁹.

Italy displayed its enthusiasm for the inaugural meeting through Moro's words, by which an optimistic stance towards this first step can be noticed:

la naturale complementarietà e continuità del mondo europeo e del mondo arabo [che avrebbe potuto portare a] un'ampia ed organica collaborazione in una prospettiva evolutiva di lungo periodo [comportando la definitiva] accettazione di quella logica mediterranea che [avevamo] sempre indicato per l'Europa.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, the Euro-Arab dialogue did not get the expected results. The reason was mainly due to the involvement of the Palestinian issue in every negotiation, betraying Arabs' will to associate the dialogue with political contents, opposing to the European intention of coming to agreements involving only economic and cultural spheres¹⁰¹. Indeed, both of the parts appeared to be averse to step back from their positions: Arabic countries insisted on demanding the official recognition of PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians together with a stronger bargaining power than Israel; the European Community on the other side was unable to set itself free from Washington's influence¹⁰².

Although communitarian policies on the relationship with the Middle-East were pursued, bilateral agreements kept being favoured among the member States¹⁰³. Diplomatic relations with Egypt played a central role from the mid-1970s, since the country opened to negotiations with Israel and together was the reference nation among Arabic regions. During a visit to Cairo of the Italian President Leone both of the parties stressed the importance of the Palestinian cause, although both of them agreed on not denying Israel's worthiness of existence. Egypt was strongly committed to hold a peaceful dialogue with Israel. On 1th September 1975, Egypt and Israel signed an agreement according to which the latter had to further withdraw from the region of Sinai; moreover, conforming to it, not-military ships were allowed to cross the Suez

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ A. Moro, Relazione alla Commissione Esteri della Camera dei Deputati, Roma, 1 Agosto 1974, in S. Labbate, *Illusioni Mediterranee: il Dialogo Euro Arabo*, Le Monnier, Firenze: 2016, p. 41.

¹⁰¹ Labbate, *Illusioni mediterranee*, 224.

¹⁰² Ibid., 225.

¹⁰³ Calandri, "Il Mediterraneo nella politica estera italiana," 375.

Canal¹⁰⁴. In April of the same year the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Rumor, during a visit to Sadat, expressed his approval of the renewed negotiations between Egypt and Israel on devising a solution for the conflict. Furthermore, he promoted the European involvement as a guarantor in the diplomacy between the countries. Nonetheless, the Italian initiative on Europe's behalf weakened the following year. In 1976 the Egyptian President Sadat, during a visit aiming at establishing new alliances—replacing the Soviet one, lost because of the Egyptian approach to USA and Israel¹⁰⁵—asked the Italian government for being a moderator among severe European countries, i.e. Netherlands and Denmark. Italy made only vague declarations. A turning point happened as soon as Jimmy Carter became President of the USA: the dialogue between the two involved parts yielded significant advancement thanks to the resolute new President's commitment to the cause of the human rights¹⁰⁶. Steps forward were moved towards a recognition of Palestinian people's rights and the identification of a homeland. To this purpose, according to the US administration, Palestinian representatives should take part to the negotiations taking place in Geneva. In November 1977, an unexpected visit by the Egyptian President Sadat to the city of Jerusalem shocked the entire world. Italy paid close attention to the event and among parties positive feedbacks were provided: they emphasized the importance of Sadat's gesture, which challenged both Israel and Arabic countries to make efforts free from prejudices and resentment¹⁰⁷. In the course of that year, thanks to the stabilisation of the oil market, Italy could afford to lead its foreign policy in the Arabic countries from a more political view¹⁰⁸. Nonetheless, its actions were bounded by the activity of the USA, which were leading the negotiations. Although Italy always tried to be on the front line at fostering concerted efforts as far as Middle-East was concerned, other European countries, mainly France and United Kingdom, kept on moving individually¹⁰⁹.

Moreover, every attempt of concerted actions by European countries was firmly stigmatised by the US administration, which regarded them as an attack to the Atlantic

¹⁰⁴ "Accordo Di Disimpegno Fra Egitto e Israele (1° Settembre 1975)," *Oriente Moderno* 55, no. 7/8 (1975): 287.

¹⁰⁵ Varsori, *Storia internazionale*, 312.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, 282.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 283.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 283–285.

block and an opportunity for Arab countries to foster their idea of the establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO)¹¹⁰. Also Italian autonomous actions were criticized by US authorities: Moro was perceived as the advocate of this kind of policy, which was pursued also thanks to agreements reached by ENI (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi, National Hydrocarbons Authority); nonetheless, his project involved also multilateral accords to be sought in the context of a Communitarian strategy, exploiting the favourable period of détente¹¹¹. Although Andreotti was preferred as interlocutor by the US administration, he was not spared by Kissinger's criticism, which provided the litmus test of the US contempt towards Italian politicians: « Andreotti could not restrain himself from expressing the perennial illusion that Italy could contribute by reasons of propinquity to the solution of the Middle East problem. But while every Italian leader I met advanced this proposition, none acted as if he believed in it»¹¹².

As every Italian actions on the foreign context in this decade, Italian Mediterranean policy was undermined by internal pressures starting from 1976, which was the famous year of the "Historic Compromise": Washington's influence became more persistent, so that every move was weighed according USA's will and, more generally, according to the Cold War's categories, even in the Mediterranean matter¹¹³.

¹¹⁰ Elisabetta Bini, "Reshaping Transatlantic Energy Relations: Italy, the United States and Arab Producers During the 1970s," in *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War: The Underrated Ally*, ed. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria, Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 179–204.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Henry Kissinger in Elisabetta Bini, "Reshaping Transatlantic Energy Relations: Italy, the United States and Arab Producers During the 1970s," in *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War: The Underrated Ally*, ed. Antonio Varsori and Benedetto Zaccaria, Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 195.

¹¹³ Calandri, "Il Mediterraneo nella politica estera italiana," 377–378.

2 Great Britain in the 1970s

In this chapter Great Britain's international role is analyzed with references to its position in the East-West conflict, its membership in the European Economic Community and the controversial Middle-Eastern issue.

The analysis follows the same path of the first chapter regarding Italy; hence, the attempt to highlight here, as far as possible, the connections and differences between the British and Italian stance on these themes. Their objectives not always coincided, but on some occasions they adopted a common strategy in specific issues, for instance in supporting the development of a European Regional Policy within the EEC.

Their closeness within the EEC did not stem from a shared ideal of what the Community represented for them—the widening of its market for Britain, a supranational organism able to overcome domestic political and social divisions within the country, as Italy—but on the goal of banding together to balance the influential Franco-German axis. Furthermore, an interesting parallel between the two countries could be found in their domestic background: this decade saw both of them experiencing a severe economic crisis together with social turmoil.

As for Great Britain, the social conflict in the industrial areas went at the same pace of economic decline: strikes became commonplace and trade unions acquired increasing power. Their membership hugely increased during these years reaching a record 13,498,000 in 1979¹¹⁴. The troubles worried both the Conservative government of Edward Heath, in power until 1974—with the two national coal miners' strikes in 1972 and 1974, the latter resulting in a national state emergency and a call for general elections—and the Labour governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. Under the latter a series of industrial disputes erupted, resulting in never-ending strikes that threw the country in disarray from the end of 1978 till the beginning of 1979. Because of the continuing protests, this period was remembered as 'the winter of discontent'. Significantly, 22 January 1979 went down in history as the worst day of those weeks, in which 1.5 million public sector employees did not go to work¹¹⁵.

The 'winter of discontent' was the climax of an unstable situation that had been gradually worsening for years. Hence, it is understandable that in some areas of its

¹¹⁴ Kenneth O. Morgan, "Britain in the Seventies – Our Unfinest Hour?," *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique. French Journal of British Studies* 22, no. XXII-Hors série (December 13, 2017): 3, accessed October 30, 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/1662>.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

foreign policy, Britain suffered a lack of trust especially as far as its relations with the United States were concerned.

2.1 Great Britain in the East-West conflict: highs and lows of a ‘special relationship’

It was pointed out in the first chapter that the East-West conflict resulted in an incessant interference in Italian politics exerted by the Americans. In the following paragraphs it will be clear that Washington’s influence played a significant role also in the making of British foreign policy, regarding both its EEC membership and its strategy for the Middle-East region.

Britain’s position during the Cold War could be roughly summed up by the expression ‘special relationship’, first used by Winston Churchill during the memorable ‘Iron curtain’ speech held in Fulton on 4 March 1946¹¹⁶, as a description of the US-UK relations. Yet, during the decade under examination, the ‘special relationship’ underwent a change that turned it into what the British historian Bartlett labelled a ‘muted relationship’¹¹⁷. This was due to different factors mainly relating to both British interest in joining the European Community and its policy towards the Middle-East issue, which had always clashed with the US direction. Indeed, glitches in the special partnership between the two countries could be recognized in three different circumstances: the so called ‘year of Europe’, the fourth Arab-Israeli war and the oil crises¹¹⁸.

The Heath’s Tory government installed in 1970 strongly pushed towards the entry in the EEC— occurred on 1 January 1973— nevertheless the Prime Minister reassured the American President Richard Nixon that relations between the two nations would not change, since the British government was still committed to maintaining collaboration with the US administration¹¹⁹. This reassurance was welcomed by the American President, since Nixon potentially now could count on new channel of influence through

¹¹⁶ Giulia Bentivoglio, *La Relazione Necessaria. La Gran Bretagna Del Governo Heath e Gli Stati Uniti (1970-1974)* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011), 15–16.

¹¹⁷ Christopher John Bartlett, *“The Special Relationship”: A Political History of Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (London: New York Longman, 1992), 127.

¹¹⁸ Thomas Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 74.

¹¹⁹ Giulia Bentivoglio, *“La Gran Bretagna Del Governo Heath e La Special Relationship Anglo-Americana”* (presented at the Seminario di Storia Internazionale dell’Età Contemporanea, Padova, 2009), 9–10.

Britain presence in the European Community, in addition to its leadership role within the NATO context. The American position at the head of the North Atlantic Alliance was slowly undermined at the beginning of the 1970s, mainly because of the unilateral initiative of the US administration in foreign policy. Bombings against Cambodia in 1969, support to the coup d'état in that region, support to the coup led by General Pinochet in 1973, together with intervention in support of Israel in the Yom Kippur war without consulting its allies made US administration unpopular in the eyes of the European countries¹²⁰. The end of the Bretton-Woods system, causing limitation in the imports from Europe and Japan, was a further reason for friction. Moreover, American domestic policy was undergoing the consequences of the Watergate scandal involving President Nixon, undermining his credibility.

This was the mood, when Kissinger—once again unbeknown to the European allies—declared 1973 as the ‘year of Europe’, meaning a renewal of NATO’s bonds and a request of a new Atlantic Charter¹²¹. Behind the demand for a new Declaration of principles stood the US objective to linking the European economic matters to the military-security matters regarding US-EEC relations¹²². This new diplomatic development was connected with the recent enlargement of the European Community: as already described in the first chapter, the entry of Great Britain together with Ireland and Denmark allowed to plan more ambitious economic agreements, such as the European Monetary System, which in US’s eyes could represent a serious threat for the American economy.

There was, however, no intention to develop a policy aiming at dividing the enlarged community, as some European State members thought. It was rather an attempt to reinvigorate American leadership within the NATO.

Nevertheless, Kissinger’s plan was a tough testing ground for Britain, divided as it was between the ‘special relationship’ and its membership in the EEC. Indeed, US administration counted on its preferred ally to work on the Declaration on a US-UK basis. Although Heath’s position towards Kissinger’s plan was negative, since he

¹²⁰ Varsori, *Storia internazionale*, 279–291.

¹²¹ Ibid., 291.

¹²² Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977*, 77.

wanted to discuss the issue with the other communitarian states, British officials showed a different stance during the meetings with Kissinger¹²³.

This ambiguous direction of UK's policy contributed to the deterioration of climate between the two states during the summer of that same year. The British Ambassador to the United States Lord Cromer together with Baron Trend urged Heath to respond positively to the US proposal, since Nixon placed great importance on this project¹²⁴. Yet, opinions from the British Treasury and officials across many departments were skeptical, since they deemed that America plan would have involved a US-EEC monetary reform that would have threaten European economic policy developed till then¹²⁵. Behind Britain, also France disagreed with the Declaration but, contrary to the British, Pompidou's administration had a not constructive stance. While Britain prompted to modify American proposal in accordance with EEC's interests—thus, with the caveat that economic and security issues should be treated separately—France seemed inflexible¹²⁶.

Britain was heavily influenced by French position and at a point in the drafting of the Declaration, the British turned their back on the US. Indeed, the British Prime Minister decided that bilateral negotiations' records between the two countries relating to the declaration should be conveyed to all the communitarian members, whereas UK-EEC talks would be led privately¹²⁷. The American response was severe: Britain should be undermined by removing the American support on the intelligence and nuclear weapons cooperation, whereas the US administration would deal with the German and Italian governments¹²⁸. As examined in the first chapter, the latter ,despite its difficult domestic situation, promoted an agreement with the Americans in order to give the Community an identity in the world¹²⁹.

¹²³ Ibid., 80.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 81–82.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁶ Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, 131.

¹²⁷ Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977*, 84–85.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁹ Carla Meneguzzi Rostagni, “Il Progetto Europeo Di Aldo Moro,” in *Aldo Moro Nella Dimensione Internazionale. Dalla Memoria Alla Storia* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2013), 111.

The nuclear cooperation with the Americans was the Achilles' heel of Great Britain. Indeed, Heath's policy regarding both the transmission of the records and the secrecy of UK-EEC meetings was abandoned¹³⁰.

Despite the renewed stance of the EEC members towards the Declaration of Principles and the hurry showed during the negotiations, the crisis in the Middle-East produced another reason for friction.

As already mentioned, the Yom Kippur War fostered European hostility to the United States. Nonetheless American intervention was widely misinterpreted at the time: even the 'special' partner of US deemed it was an action triggered by Nixon's domestic problems¹³¹. To Nixon, it was the outcome of a geopolitical strategy to prevent the USSR from taking control of the region¹³².

On the other hand US totally dismissed British's reason to take a neutral position in this conflict: Britain and other European countries— including Italy— relied on Arab oil supplies and supporting Israel meant undergoing an embargo.

The first conflict between the two 'special' partners regarded the British refusal of tabling a ceasefire resolution entailing a return to the status quo ante bellum. The American Secretary of State reassured Britain that the Egyptian President Sadat would accept the ceasefire, if it came from the British and added that the US could not present such a proposal because of the important role of the Jewish lobby in America¹³³. The American request was made in the frame of UK-US relations, since Kissinger prohibited Great Britain from consulting other States and other members of the UNSC¹³⁴. The British refusal heavily irritated the US administration and made it reconsider relations between the two states. The situation worsened further when Britain made clear that it wouldn't made available its airbases for US operators in support to Israel.

The last straw causing a damage in US-UK relationships occurred when the US decided to heightened the state of alert of their military forces at DEFCON III unbeknownst to

¹³⁰ Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977*, 88–89.

¹³¹ Ibid., 98.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Bentivoglio, "La Gran Bretagna Del Governo Heath e La Special Relationship Anglo-Americana," 19–20.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

all the NATO's members, but Great Britain¹³⁵. The British Ambassador Cromer was informed from the very beginning of the Soviet letter causing the American reaction and was told that the US expected a strong support from England¹³⁶. Actually, what arrived was the disapproval of the uninformed Prime Minister, who firmly complained about American behavior.

As a consequence, Kissinger wanted to reevaluate US European policy and intelligence cooperation with Britain was suspended again¹³⁷.

US-UK relations further deteriorated during negotiations for a long-term Arab-Israeli solution to the war. Arab oil producer countries had threatened Western nations to increase the price of oil and reduce oil production by 5%, if a solution according to UN Resolution 242 was not devised. The EEC adopted a pro-Arab stance. British decision was hard: it had to choose between not disappointing the Americans and defending its interests. Britain heavily depended on Arab oil and antagonize them would mean not only economic problems but political troubles as well. Once again, Kissinger was really annoyed by Britain and the Community because they spoiled his efforts to find a possible long-term solution to the conflict—a solution based on the UN Resolution 242 would not be accepted by Israel.

As the oil embargo went on, bilateral agreements were reached by European countries. Therefore Kissinger proposed a collaborative consumer response to the Embargo and launched the idea of an Energy Action Group to be discussed on an Energy Conference involving all the Western states. Publicly, Heath gave his support to the proposal, but feared an excessive influence of the US on the EEC's foreign policy. As always France opposed the American proposal and stated that a Communitarian action was required, otherwise bilateral agreements should go on. This time Britain followed its own interests, since domestic situation was becoming unbearable and Heath's government was undergoing serious difficulty, with the Labor Party asking for his resignation.

The preparation of the Conference was marked by the restoration of US-UK secret diplomacy, although Heath was still cautious regarding a specific goal proposed by

¹³⁵ Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977*, 95.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 97.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 98.

Kissinger: enhancing economic and monetary policy cooperation in order to face this difficult period¹³⁸. The same objective that inspired the 'Year of Europe' plan.

The Conference held on 11 February 1974 marked a turning point in both American and British opinion. As for the former American support for British EEC membership could be noticed. The initial American enthusiasm was replaced by the awareness that Britain had no fear of opposing the US for the sake of European unity—unless it clashed with British interests¹³⁹. As for Britain, it acknowledged that a combined European policy was far from being achieved and that the traditional broker role of Britain between the US and European states was no longer possible¹⁴⁰.

February 1974 saw a reversal in the UK politics: the establishment of a minority Labour government destined to last till the end of the decade. Harold Wilson and James Callaghan were the Prime Ministers alternating in power during this period and both did not share the profound commitment to Europe that marked Heath's activity. On the contrary their political plans involved a closer relations with the US. With reference to previous events occurred when Conservative were in power, James Callaghan, acting as Foreign Secretary of Wilson, stated his disapproval of the idea that a European unity would come out only with a head-on collision with the US¹⁴¹.

Yet, this new English position was not welcomed by the American Administration as Britain expected. Indeed, Wilson was truly surprised to confirm that the UK was no longer held in high esteem by the American government. A hint of this attitude was the low collaboration the American Treasury revealed during the economic crisis of 1976¹⁴².

Regardless of the 'muted' relationship, the presence of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State safeguarded a continuity in the American foreign policy. The US administration found helpful having contact with the British government in the second half of the 1970s, especially because of the insistent Communist threat in the Mediterranean area¹⁴³. As it was investigated in the first chapter regarding Italy, the US was strongly worried about the Communist progress in Italy especially in the light of the Portuguese

¹³⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 111.

¹⁴⁰ Bentivoglio, "*La Gran Bretagna Del Governo Heath e La Special Relationship Anglo-Americana*," 24.

¹⁴¹ Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, 134–135.

¹⁴² Ibid., 135.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Revolution. During these debates, UK proved to have a more lucid and less alarmist view of what was happening in the Mediterranean shores and although it felt puzzled because of the heavy interference the US was carrying out in Italy, it agreed on discussing the issue in a secret meeting at Rambouillet¹⁴⁴.

If collaboration between the two countries went on—although muted—during the last phase of Kissinger’s era, during the presidency of Jimmy Carter, Britain was disregarded and treated as an ordinary European country¹⁴⁵. The reason behind this American standpoint lay mainly in the fact that Britain was undergoing serious economic and political problems in the second half of the 1970s: increase in inflation make it necessary for London to resort to the hugest loan from the IMF at that time and as for politics, the governing party suffered from internal divergence. With such a context, the American administration preferred to focus its concern on the increasing advancement of the Japanese economy¹⁴⁶.

By virtue of what was defined a ‘special relationship’ one could expect that cooperation between the parts would be ‘automatic’ or, in a way, ‘instinctive’¹⁴⁷ thanks to a common heritage consisting in shared historic roots and values¹⁴⁸. Quite the opposite, relations between the US and Britain proved to be critically difficult during the Seventies, as this paragraph meant to show. The disagreement displayed by the US administration sometimes had direct influence on the English foreign policy. Taking it to the extreme, Britain suffered in the foreign policy what Italy experienced in its domestic field: the US political weight.

As shown above, the balk of the American disagreement regarded the British membership of the EEC. In the following paragraph British efforts in the European Integration process are examined.

2.2 Great Britain in the European Integration

If the relationship with the US had experienced better periods, the same could not be said for British relation with the European Community. The extreme left of the Labour Party had always made an issue of Britain joining the EEC. It had opposed British entry

¹⁴⁴ Varsori, “Puerto Rico (1976),” 98.

¹⁴⁵ Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, 137–140.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 139.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., ix.

¹⁴⁸ Bentivoglio, *La Relazione Necessaria. La Gran Bretagna Del Governo Heath e Gli Stati Uniti (1970-1974)*, 11.

since the first attempt made by the Conservative Macmillan's government in 1963 and they would maintain this political line even in the future Britain bids (in 1967 and 1969)¹⁴⁹. The reason behind this hostile stance lay mainly on the final European objective of a political union—resulting in a political federation—shared by all the other European members, Italy included. According to the words of Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party, this eventuality would '[...] mean the end of Britain as an independent nation state'¹⁵⁰. Nevertheless, the French veto of both UK's bids solved the domestic conflict. The main reason for this obstacle was to be found in De Gaulle's concern about a greater American influence in the Community. Indeed, by virtue of the 'special relationship', the French President deemed the UK as the American 'Trojan Horse' and feared an American influence on the Common Market together with an American leverage in the weak European policy¹⁵¹. Moreover, a British presence in the Community was perceived as a threat for the French leadership. Once Georges Pompidou succeeded De Gaulle, French point of view changed and the enlargement of the Community was possible. This shift in position was provoked by the increasing independence of West Germany's foreign policy, whose successful 'Ostpolitik' ensured its economic development, making the German country be perceived by France as a dangerous rival¹⁵².

Thus, from a political stand, the entrance of Britain was supposed to balance power within the Community. It was also this reason that moved Italy towards a complete support for Britain, as already mentioned in the first chapter, although also other factors made cooperation between Italy and Britain possible. In the period between 1969 and 1973, that is the years of British negotiations, there was a general agreement between the UK and Italy on various aspects of the Community. Discussions between the two nations dealt with different matters and ranged from the regional policy to the reform of European institutions, and from financial cooperation to relations between the enlarged Europe and non-Communitarian countries. Nonetheless the two nations did not deem all the issues worthy of the same commitment. As shown in the first chapter, Italy strongly

¹⁴⁹ Richard Davis, "Euro-scepticism and Opposition to British Entry into the EEC, 1955-75," *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique. French Journal of British Studies* 22, no. XXII-2 (March 16, 2017): 7, accessed October 1, 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/1364>.

¹⁵⁰ Hugh Gaitskell quot. in *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Martin Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union 1945-2008: A History of European Integration* (Taylor & Francis, 2010), 101.

¹⁵² Varsori, "La questione europea nella politica italiana," 334-335.

backed the reform of Communitarian institution by promoting the universal suffrage of the European Parliament. Britain's point of view on this matter was slightly lukewarm, since firstly it demanded clearer boundaries between the national and European Parliament as a prerogative and secondly it had to harmonise legislation. Moreover, Britain judged the strengthening of the Communitarian Parliament to be an initial stage in the process of a federalist Community¹⁵³, an idea that HMG resolutely opposed to. On the other hand, among the projects the two states were involved to, there was the strengthening of the European funds to reduce the development gap within the EEC. Indeed, the project of a regional policy aiming at flattening discrepancy between industrialized and rural countries was underestimated during the negotiations of the first treaties, mainly because of the belief that a liberal market would overcome regional imbalance¹⁵⁴. Nevertheless, a need for implementation of the regional policy was recognized as soon as the idea of the EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) was proposed during the Paris Summit of October 1972. In a meeting between Andreotti and Heath, respectively Italy's and UK's Prime Ministers, held before the October Summit, the two heads of government agreed on the need for a regional fund, but differed on where the bulk of the fund should be allocated: to industrial areas in decline, in the British point of view, whereas to retarded rural zones according to Italy. Despite this difference, Great Britain and Italy revealed themselves to be allies during the Paris Summit and thanks to their pressures, the Community was asked for giving a solution to regional problems through the establishment of a Regional Development Fund to be operative by 31 December 1973¹⁵⁵. Significantly, the new Commissioner for Regional Policy that year was George Thomson, a British Labour Party MP that presented a report assessing the regional disparities and coming up with general directions for legislative proposals, including the key aspects of the Regional Fund¹⁵⁶. As stated in Thomson's report, the Regional Fund was a trial testing the Community solidarity. Indeed, it was perceived this way by British pro-Europe politicians, who had to oppose the anti-Marketeer propaganda of the Labour Party. This propaganda stressed that no

¹⁵³ John Wilson Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-92* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1993), 140.

¹⁵⁴ John Bachtler and Carlos Mendez, *EU Cohesion Policy and European Integration: The Dynamics of EU Budget and Regional Policy Reform* (Routledge, 2016).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

profits would derive from British membership of the Community, focusing on the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) issue, which would cost more to Britain than the country could ever benefit from¹⁵⁷. Thus, in Thomson's idea, the Regional Fund was a way to prove that the UK could benefit from EEC membership¹⁵⁸.

Yet, the European Regional Fund (ERF) would be hindered by the dispute over its financing—with West Germany and France wanting a smaller budget than that proposed by the Commission, in opposition to Great Britain, Ireland and Italy demanding for higher coffers—and some technical aspects, regarding the voting method and the responsibility of the programmes' final approval¹⁵⁹. In addition to technical reasons, debates about the ERF were brought to a halt also because of external and domestic factors¹⁶⁰. In the first place, in the oil-crisis context described in the paragraph above, tension between European members arose because of the reluctance of the UK to hold discussions about an energy policy, compounding the already rigid stance of the German government on the Regional Fund. Secondly, regression following the oil-crisis together with the new Labour government's pledge to renegotiate the terms of British entry eclipsed the pursuit of an agreement on the ERF.

2.2.1 The European Monetary System (EMS): a British Tool for Negotiation

British and Italian cooperation on backing the project of the Regional Development Fund and a fairer reform of the Common Agricultural Policy were not the only fields on which Britain and Italy tried to lead a shared strategy. The enterprise of the European Monetary System witnessed continuous negotiations between the two nations, which could have brought to significant achievement on the aforementioned projects, if only the debate had not taken place in very gloomy times for both the countries and Britain had not been so doubtful whether joining the EMS or not¹⁶¹.

In 1978—the year when the idea of the EMS was proposed at the European Council in Copenhagen—Callaghan's government was undergoing a crisis because of the lack of a majority in the House of Commons. The ghost of elections presented itself

¹⁵⁷ Robert Saunders, *Yes to Europe!: The 1975 Referendum and Seventies Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 280.

¹⁵⁸ "Lord Thomson of Monifieth," October 5, 2008, sec. News, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/3141475/Lord-Thomson-of-Monifieth.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Bachtler and Mendez, *EU Cohesion Policy and European Integration*.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 114.

continuously, the Labour Party always clashed from within and European matters were definitely not issues on which it was easy to agree. Callaghan was in a complicated situation, since if he accepted the System as it was conceived by the French and Germans, he should be ready to cope with discontent within the party ranks. If he did not, the sterling crisis would be an eventuality to deal with¹⁶². At the end, Callaghan decided not to incur the split of the party, and already in October 1978 he decided not to join the EMS. The Prime Minister hoped that the positive economic situation begun in 1977—characterized by the improvement of the balance of payments and a decline in inflation—would prolong in order to exploit it in the forthcoming electoral campaign¹⁶³. Nevertheless Callaghan had already linked EMS negotiations to the reconsideration of the CAP and overall, to a redistribution of resources in its favour¹⁶⁴. Thus, in order not to compromise the outcome to the ongoing concurrent studies on resource transfers, Callaghan decided not to make clear to other European states—not even the Italian ally—his decision about the EMS¹⁶⁵.

It has to be said that many States within the Community saw the attempt by the UK to link the EMS discussions to a modification of the CAP as a way of a further renegotiation and as an endeavour to destroy the Agricultural Policy¹⁶⁶. Within the Community only Germany and Italy agreed on its modification. Despite the first was a major contributor of the Community expenditure and thus aimed at reducing the CAP costs, it could not support the British attempt for domestic reasons.

Thus, Italy proved to be the only possible ally for Great Britain. Yet, as the politician Edmund Dell noticed, Italian and British objectives were not perfectly aligned¹⁶⁷. Firstly, the peninsula wanted a reduction in subsidies to North European agricultural only to secure more subsidy to Mediterranean agriculture, whereas Britain's goal was an overall reform aiming at reducing high import prices for food from other member states. Secondly, Italy was leading discussions on the CAP separately from the concurrent

¹⁶² Dell, "Britain and the Origins of the European Monetary System," 31–32.

¹⁶³ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 118.

¹⁶⁴ Dell, "Britain and the Origins of the European Monetary System," 17.

¹⁶⁵ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 119.

¹⁶⁶ Dell, "Britain and the Origins of the European Monetary System," 18.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

studies, thus implying that it saw no connections between the CAP's review and the development of the European Monetary System¹⁶⁸.

Although Great Britain had already chose not to join the EMS, it kept on collaborating with the Italian government. This was of paramount importance, since it was thought that France was acting in order to split Italy from the UK, granting concessions to Rome on the resource transfers for securing its entry to the EMS. Indeed, the French were discussing of resource transfers for the Italians and Irish, without mentioning Great Britain¹⁶⁹.

As already accounted in the first paragraph, Italy joined the system even though its close ally backed away from it. Their divergent paths were to be connected to their different stance towards Europe. As previously described, Callaghan had to cope with the Labour Party's opposition to any kind of European policy; moreover, the European choice was always called into question in Britain—the latest membership referendum was held just three years earlier. As for Italy, it had always proved its loyalty to the ideal of Europe, but its pursuit of a practical programme inside the Community pushed it closer to the UK¹⁷⁰. Yet, this time a political alignment with Great Britain would have meant being isolated from the rest of the group.

Despite their different decisions on the EMS, the two governments showed themselves wishful for carrying on cooperation and addressing it to prompting reform of the Community budget and the Common Agricultural Policy¹⁷¹.

Actually, Anglo-Italian relations went into a dramatic decline since then. Britain tended to underestimate Italy's role within the EEC and undervalue the benefits a collaboration with Rome would bring¹⁷².

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹⁶⁹ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 119–120.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 125.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 125–126.

2.2.2 Universal suffrage of the European Parliament: the British stance

Following the path marked in the first chapter, here is given an overall account of the British stance on direct elections for the Community Parliament.

As mentioned in the section regarding Britain's entry into the Community, Britain's and Italy's point of view diverged, as far as universal suffrage of the European Parliament was concerned.

In January 1973, during the celebration of Britain's membership, the then Prime Minister Edward Heath stated that '[...] our objective of a democratic Community is not going to be misdirected by a desire to see direct elections to the European Parliament'¹⁷³. Indeed, at that time, the Conservative government entered the Community in prospect of widening its market, not surely aiming at what it saw as a development of Europe into a federalist union.

Despite of the declaration signed in 1969, in which Italian and British government agreed on the need of an integrated Europe—entailing direct elections of the European parliament, as well—the bulk of British were reluctant to the suffrage. It has to be noticed that discussions over direct elections came six months later than the membership referendum: the atmosphere was still imbued with slogans on the loss of sovereignty that a full integration would mean.

The Conservative Party, through the words of its leader Mrs. Thatcher, expressed its support to the direct elections issue, marking it as a Treaty duty. Thus, it was felt as an external constraint by some English politicians, whereas Italian government acknowledged its strategic importance to hinder a Europe led by the Franco-German axis. Actually, at that time, also Mrs. Thatcher understood that the Parliament was the only communitarian institution able to balance the Commission's and the Council of Ministers' power; hence, the need of bestowing electoral legitimacy on it¹⁷⁴.

As for the Labour Party, it strongly opposed the idea of direct elections. It was Labour MPs' opinion that the process of integration was undergoing a not natural acceleration. Indeed, they argued that a more democratic Community was firstly to be reached by balance in the budget and resources distribution rather than by direct elections of

¹⁷³ Edward Heath quot. in Caroline Jackson, "The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies," *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 2 (1993): 190–191.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

institutions people are not familiar with¹⁷⁵. What actually some Labours feared was that a stronger European Parliament would threat national independence¹⁷⁶.

Despite the fact that during the Labour Party Conference of September 1976, the Labour members had voted a motion against direct elections, the government stated that it would lay the required legislation before Parliament in the short term¹⁷⁷.

A pivotal reason causing the Labour government's decision of direct election was due to a domestic issue. The Liberal Party, the major supporting party of Callaghan's government by means of the Lib-Lab Pact, was strongly committed to the process of European integration, hence not only the key advocate of the universal suffrage of the European Parliamentary Assembly, but also a supporter of the proportional system of voting, in contrast to most Labour MPs, endorsing the 'first-past-the-post' system¹⁷⁸. Finally, in November 1977 the English parliament approved Euro-elections but rejected the bill proposing the proportional system, making it necessary to reintroduce the 'first-past-the-post' system, causing a delay in the European election date¹⁷⁹.

2.3 The G7: Great Britain's position

In the first paragraph both origins of the G7 and Italian effort to be part of the group were examined. It was said the opposition mounted by Paris to the possibility of an Italian participation, and it was mentioned the pivotal role Great Britain had on endorsing Italy's participation to the summit to be held in Rambouillet. Indeed, each host had its preference for nations they thought should be invited to the summit. While France was determined to hold a meeting involving only the three European major countries and the US, the Federal Republic of Germany expressed its desire to include Japan, so that Germany would not be the only country defeated in the World War II¹⁸⁰. The Americans strongly pushed France to include Canada in the list as a major partner

¹⁷⁵ "EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (DEVELOPMENTS) (Hansard, 3 December 1975)," accessed October 10, 2019, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1975/dec/03/european-communities-developments>.

¹⁷⁶ Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-92*, 132.

¹⁷⁷ Jackson, "The First British MEPs," 191.

¹⁷⁸ Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-92*, 132.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Giuliano Garavini, "The Battle for the Participation of the European Community in the G7 (1975-1977)," *Journal of European Integration History* 12, no. 1 (2006): 145.

of the US, but Giscard dissented from this idea, since otherwise minor European countries would demand for a seat in the summit, as well¹⁸¹.

Both the UK and the US were concerned about Italy's economic and political situation. Italian economy was judged to be deteriorating and its fate was linked to the world's economic situation, which should improve in order to bring about a change to an economy, which would otherwise collapse¹⁸².

As for the Italian political situation, in an informal meeting held during the CSCE in Helsinki, President Ford and Prime Minister Wilson, together with their Secretary of State, commented Italian condition as critical, because of the weakness of Moro's government and the possibility of cooperation with the Communists advanced by the Italian Socialist Party¹⁸³.

Hence, the English and the Americans backed Italy's participation to the Rambouillet summit, mostly because of the negative consequences its absence could arise than for contribution its presence could make. Finally, Italy was accepted also by France and the West Germany on grounds of their domestic political reasons and not because they were in charge of the presidency of the European Council of Ministers at the time¹⁸⁴.

Although it belonged to the original group of the summit, Great Britain's economic and political conditions were not better than Italy's. As for the first, Great Britain had experienced, during the 1970s, a mix of circumstances marked with exceptionalism, since they revealed record breaking figures. A large-scale unemployment, the highest inflation since the aftermath of the World War I, a serious setback in output and a severe crisis in industries and firms¹⁸⁵.

Regarding British politics, it could not be said that Wilson's government—succeeded to the Conservative Heath in 1974—reached an overwhelming consensus in the British Parliament. Indeed, at first he formed a government supported by minority groups, guaranteeing very little stability to the cabinet. Not only economy was characterized by record breaking figures in those years, but also the political scene, which witnessed two

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² United States Department of State, *Foreign Economic Policy, 1973-1976* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 305.

¹⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation, "Harold Wilson and Gerald Ford, Helsinki, 30 July 1975," n.d., 4–5, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1553188.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ TNA PREM 16/838, "FCO to UK Embassy Paris. 'The Economic Summit Conference at Rambouillet,'" n.d., 2, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110959>.

¹⁸⁵ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 53.

general elections in a single year, i.e. 1974, an event that had not happen since 1910. In the October general elections, however, the Labour Party succeeded in achieving a majority, although narrow.

In this background, a further factor placed Great Britain in a delicate situation, i.e. the renegotiation of EEC membership and the Referendum held on 5 June 1975, whose result confirmed the British belonging to the Community but probably made the German and French governments sceptic on the British commitment. Indeed, in a report drafted by the British Embassy in Paris in the aftermath of the economic summit, the French attitude towards Great Britain was described as ‘qualified and watchful’¹⁸⁶.

In such a climate of economic weakness and political instability, Great Britain took a moderate position during the Rambouillet summit in 1975. The French objective of fixed parity exchange rates in the style of the Bretton Woods system—pursued during the summit—stood in contrast with the profits of countries with a weak economy, i.e. Britain and Italy. Nonetheless in accordance with a German strategy, Wilson agreed that fixed parities would be a topic of discussion for the summit, so that negotiations on the IMF quotas would be conducted in a constructive way by French¹⁸⁷.

In the end, only general economic and financial matters were discussed during the summit meeting, but every nation judged useful the gathering. Indeed, despite of the lack of a remarkable agreement among the participants, a profit was that the assembly could be informed of domestic political elements and international forces influencing the policy of each country¹⁸⁸.

During the summit, both Moro and the British Chancellor Healey stressed the urgency to focus the Western attention on the issue of unemployment, which was a common plague within the participants¹⁸⁹. Moreover, both Italy and Britain highlighted the importance of a gradual reduction of the budget deficit from the healthy countries, since this would entail a damage in the recovery of the other ill nations, such as Britain and Italy, which suffered high rates of inflation. Hence, the major countries were warned by

¹⁸⁶ TNA PREM 16/838, “UK Embassy Paris to FCO. Rambouillet: The French View.,” n.d., 5, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110958>.

¹⁸⁷ TNA PREM 16/356, “Wilson-Healey Meeting on Proposed Economic Summit. Record of Conversation.,” n.d., 2–3, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110974>.

¹⁸⁸ TNA PREM 16/838, “FCO to UK Embassy Paris. ‘The Economic Summit Conference at Rambouillet,’” 16.

¹⁸⁹ Ford Library, “Rambouillet Summit. Session 1. US Record.,” November 15, 1975, accessed October 18, 2019, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111077>.

the British and Italians, since their economy could affect the rest of the world's recovery¹⁹⁰. Yet, since Rambouillet the opposite occurred with Britain's and Italy's worsening economy affecting other European nations. Indeed, devaluation of their currencies in the two countries put severe pressure on the French franc¹⁹¹.

Both British and Italian government kept on adopting expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, causing a serious budget deficit and running up huge foreign debts. For this reason, Britain's economy had started being cause for alarm in the US administration since the very beginning of 1976.

It was already said in the first paragraph that Italy represented the major concern of the United States and European countries by the time of Puerto Rico, because of both its economy and the 'red scare' of the Communist rise. It has to be added now that Italy was not alone, as far as the economic troubles were concerned. Indeed, the 'special partner' of Great Britain used to tackle Italian and British situation jointly, as it can be noticed from documents of the Ford Administration¹⁹².

Before the second G7 summit, the US administration had found a solution to the problem of aiding the two countries and at the same time having reassurances that practical measures would be implemented by their governments in order to undertake a programme of domestic economic and financial stabilisation¹⁹³. Resorting to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would guarantee the provision of official credit in accordance with the fulfilment of structural reform programmes. In the aftermath of the Puerto Rico summit, both Great Britain and Italy got a loan from the IMF; furthermore, the first was granted the largest loan ever requested from the IMF at the time, namely nearly \$ 4 billion—although Britain did not need to withdraw the whole amount¹⁹⁴.

This was the British background in the year of the Puerto Rico Summit: a broken nation, aware of the difficult period it was going through, but reluctant to be connected to Italy's fate. This defensive stance was adopted by the British Prime Minister in a bilateral meeting with President Ford in the first morning of the summit, during which Callaghan vigorously defended his government's economic policy, stating his 'own

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Bentivoglio, *The Two Sick Men of Europe?*, 65.

¹⁹² Ibid., 64.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 66.

¹⁹⁴ "The Cabinet Papers | Sterling Devalued and the IMF Loan," accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/sterling-devalued-imf-loan.htm>.

determination [...] to move with all possible speed towards our goals of beating inflation and achieving a strong, sustainable and balanced recovery'¹⁹⁵. But in order to achieve this goal—by bolstering British social consensus and thus political stability—Callaghan demanded that the US administration recognized the British efforts and showed appreciation for what the Labour government had already achieved, instead of publicly criticizing the slow process of recovery¹⁹⁶. Going on with his defence, Callaghan wanted to make the difference between Italy and Great Britain clear to his special partner, commenting that 'our social consensus is not only an economic factor. It is a political factor of immense importance, a guarantee of political stability. When there is any temptation to mention Italy and the UK in the same breath, remember this'¹⁹⁷.

Despite of its condition of 'sick man of Europe', Great Britain was among the four countries discussing a concerted way to react to the threat of Communists gaining governmental position in Italy.

As mentioned in the first paragraph, the Puerto Rico summit was preceded by secret talks demanded by the US administration and involving Heads of government of Great Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany. The three European countries were already discussing programme of official and non-official alerts to Italy in order to avoid the scenario of Communists entering government when the Americans proposed a summit for debating the 'Italian case'¹⁹⁸.

European countries were sceptical about the effectiveness of such a meeting and some analyses of the British Foreign Office underlined the fact that official and non-official statements from the United States, France and West Germany about the danger of the Italian Communists entering the government would be more effective in forestalling such a scenario¹⁹⁹. Actually, British officials feared that the agenda of the summit would deal mostly with economic issues, embarrassing the Callaghan's government²⁰⁰. Economy was indeed the keystone of the summit and the possibility of an economic aid

¹⁹⁵ TNA PREM 16/821, "Prime Minister's Meeting with President Ford in Puerto Rico on Sunday 27 June," July 9, 1976, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.margareththatcher.org/document/111488>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ "The G7 Summits: Declassified Records Published for the First Time | Margaret Thatcher Foundation," accessed October 15, 2019, <https://www.margareththatcher.org/archive/G7.asp>.

¹⁹⁹ Varsori, "Puerto Rico (1976)," 97.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

to weak countries opened up on condition that they committed themselves to adopting monetary and fiscal reforms internationally approved. In the specific case of Italy, it included also excluding the Communists from the government.

Although British officials were worried about the chance of a governmental position of the Italian Communist Party, they were puzzled by the attitude of the three Western countries, judged by the British as openly interfering on Italian politics²⁰¹. In Britain's point of view, the Americans, the French and the Germans had devised an anachronistic programme, entailing a reform of the wage policy and cuts in public spending that would be impossible without involving the Communist party. British doubts made the UK adopt a low-profile stance towards the Italian situation and refrain from giving any kind of statement against the PCI.

2.4 The Middle-East issue in the British foreign policy

As outlined in the first paragraph, the Middle-East policy of Western states during the 1970s tended to correspond to their reaction to the Yom-Kippur War, thus their position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

For Britain, circumstances were more complicated than other Western countries, since, as it was described in the paragraphs above, its foreign policy in that region was deeply intertwined with both British EEC membership and its 'special relationship' with the Americans.

It was set forth before how Great Britain was committed to developing a communitarian foreign policy, especially during the Conservative government led by Heath. It was mentioned in the first chapter the initiative of the Euro-Arab dialogue—endorsed by France and other European states, including Italy—aiming at holding direct talks between the Community and Arab world in order to tackle the oil crisis problem in the short-term period, and establishing permanent relations between the two parties regarding financial, economic and cultural cooperation.

It was reported that Italy joined the ranks of the committed supporters of the initiative from the very beginning, greeting the project enthusiastically. Regarding Great Britain, joining the Euro-Arab dialogue required careful considerations at that time, hence its delay in granting its approval to the proposal.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 109.

Britain's major concerns over the dialogue was due to various assessments: first of all, the effects of the dialogue on British interests in the Middle-Eastern region; secondly, the Israeli response to the project and lastly, the American reaction in light of the peace negotiations conducted by Kissinger²⁰². Regarding this last aspect, it played a huge role in preventing Great Britain agreeing immediately to the dialogue. Indeed, the US administration feared that this kind of initiative would result in political declaration—like the Brussels Declaration of November 1973—considered unfavourable to the shuttle diplomacy of the Secretary Kissinger²⁰³.

Despite the American warnings, the Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath supported the project involving the nine and the Arab world, stating the importance of a united Europe, which would prevent each European member being treated differently from the Arabs states. Numerous statements were released by the Conservative government, aiming at reassuring Americans that the dialogue was detached from the peace-making process. These announcements, however, would be ineffective and the Americans kept on being suspicious even with the establishment of the new Labour government, which surprisingly declared itself to be favourable to the Euro-Arab dialogue, despite of its criticism of the Conservative position on the Declaration of November 1973²⁰⁴.

The British Labour Party had always had a traditional pro-Israel stance because of its close links with the country, hence its government had to justify its decision on supporting the dialogue to a bewildered Israel. The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, James Callaghan, repeatedly reassured Israeli officials that Britain was not adopting a biased policy in favour of Arabs, but trying to secure the Arab oil supplies, while strongly opposing to a politicization of the Euro-Arab cooperation²⁰⁵. The Arab countries, indeed, were pressing the European states for the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) participation to the talks, causing a serious split within the Community, since France, Ireland and Italy declared themselves sympathetic to PLO representatives, while Britain along with West Germany, the Nederland and Denmark

²⁰² Muhamad Hasrul Zakariah, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue 1973–1978: Britain Reinsurance Policy In The Middle East Conflict," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 20, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 95–115.

²⁰³ Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1977*, 98–99.

²⁰⁴ Zakariah, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue 1973–1978."

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

opposed such proposal²⁰⁶. The Labour policy on PLO remained unchanged till the end of the decade: from Callaghan's viewpoint the Palestinian organization could not join the Euro-Arab dialogue because of both its refusal to recognize Israel as a State and the exploitation of terrorism as a political tool²⁰⁷.

In spite of the pressing regarding the PLO participation, the Labour government regarded the Euro-Arab issue a matter of urgency, affecting both its Communitarian interests and its partnership with Arabs, hence requiring a prompt positive decision²⁰⁸. Indeed, as for the European Community, Great Britain was undergoing the process of renegotiation of EEC membership terms and coming across as detached from the Communitarian concerns on the Middle-East issue would not be fruitful in the consultations. On Arabs part, if a negative solution was adopted by the British, the latter would be regarded responsible for the breakdown of a constructive dialogue and tough measures against Britain would be certainly implemented.

The British government eventually decided to take part to the dialogue— upon Washington's permit—and declared its resolution at a European Ministerial Summit in Luxembourg on 2 April 1974²⁰⁹.

The Euro-Arab cooperation field ranged from culture and social question to agriculture and scientific and technological matters. Britain was involved in each area of the project, nonetheless it had a direct action on the financial field, in which London had a co-chair role in the working group alongside of the Arabs²¹⁰.

Albeit Britain attached considerable importance on the cooperation with the Arab world, it regarded the Euro-Arab dialogue only an addition to the existing bilateral agreements. In spite of its frequent statements concerning the non-political nature of the initiative, London's interest in the Euro-Arab talks was actually political. Britain could take advantage of the dialogue in order to strengthen its relations with the Arabs and make it less easy for them place the British under pressure as far as Israel was concerned²¹¹.

²⁰⁶ Rory Miller, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Limits of European External Intervention in the Middle East, 1974–77," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 945.

²⁰⁷ Zakariah, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue 1973–1978," 102.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 102–103.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

This resulted in an increase in exports, which doubled in a time span of two years, that is from 1973 to 1975²¹².

These positive trends were counterbalance by the deadlock reached by the Euro-Arab cooperation. As mentioned in the first chapter, it slowly sank because of repeated Arab requests for a PLO participation, in the attempt of gaining political outcome; but also because the Community proved to be reluctant to delegate power to European institutions as far as foreign policy and Middle-East was concerned²¹³.

²¹² Ibid., 107.

²¹³ Miller, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Limits of European External Intervention in the Middle East, 1974–77," 953.

3 Political Violence: an introductory insight into the Red Brigades

3.1 An overall outlook on the phenomenon of political terrorism

A compelling preface written by sociologist Filippo Barbano as an introduction to the book *Dimensioni del Terrorismo Politico. Aspetti Interni e Internazionali, Politici e Giuridici*²¹⁴, through an examination of conspiracy across history, gives an enlightening insight on how the terroristic phenomenon during the Seventy's decade could be explained in a far future, exploiting the explanatory metaphor of the Catilinarian conspiracy employed in an "industrial society"²¹⁵. What happened in that decade, according to Barbano, was a similar conspiracy '[...] against the State or to revolt it, arranged by a certain amount of "invisible" actors, ideologically armed [...]'²¹⁶. The concept of invisibility is something peculiar of terrorists. A terrorist lives two lives and they radically differs each other, since his '[...] public image is that of a perfect office worker. [He] do[es]n't talk about politics at work. [...] Out of the organization, the only person that knows [his] activity is [his] wife'²¹⁷. This aspect will prove to be fundamental for a better understanding of a terrorist's identikit in the following paragraph, since it is the element that places the terrorist actor in a blurred line, in an half way between a soldier and what is called civilian.

Features like the ones mentioned above have developed over the centuries. Observing their gradual appearance, Professor Bonanate, pinpointed three different historical phases²¹⁸:

- the period of the French revolutionary government, between 1793 and 1794. It is the time when the term made its appearance in the political language, even though with the meaning of "terror";
- the second phase took place in the second half of the Nineteenth centuries and it is characterized by both populism terrorism and trademark individualist anarchism terrorism;

²¹⁴ Luigi Bonanate, ed., *Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico: Aspetti Interni e Internazionali, Politici e Giuridici* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 1979).

²¹⁵ Filippo Barbano, "Introduzione," in *Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico. Aspetti Interni e Internazionali, Politici e Giuridici*, ed. Luigi Bonanate (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 1979), 9.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 12. (My translation)

²¹⁷ Claudio, "Parla Un Terrorista," *Panorama*, June 6, 1978., in *Immagini Pubbliche e Ideologia del Terrorismo*, Carlo Marletti, 222. (My translation)

²¹⁸ Luigi Bonanate, "Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico," in *Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico: Aspetti Interni e Internazionali, Politici e Giuridici*, ed. Luigi Bonanate (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 1979), 106–107.

- the last one, is the period covering the Seventies, with its starting point placed in the time between 1967 and 1968.

Professor Bonanate's essay dates back to 1979, this is the reason why the last phase doesn't go beyond the Seventies. Probably, a fourth phase can be traced, a phase corresponding to nowadays terrorism, marked by IS attacks. A phase characterized by a polarizing aspect— which sees God's people opposing the rest of the world—specific of religious fights²¹⁹. About this, the political analyst Bruce Hoffman noted that:

There may have been, in aggregate, more terrorism in the Seventies and Eighties, but it was discriminate [...] They kept their terrorism within boundaries related to their cause. Today it's different. It's less predictable, less coherent and less cohesive. It leaves the impression of serendipity. ISIS posts pictures of a vehicle and says get in your car and drive into people—and that's all it takes.²²⁰

The less predictability of nowadays transnational terrorism is to be found in its religious nature, which dates back to the early 1990s. Indeed, religious fundamentalist groups prove to abide by duties that they believe imposed by their religion—justifying in this way violence against women and children—and consequently showing their disregard of social norms²²¹. It has largely been discussed whether terrorism of present days is a new phenomenon or is just a development, which goes at the same pace of historical changes. What is unanimously agreed is the distinctive feature that differentiates nowadays terrorists from the old terroristic organizations: the first are moved by religious motivations whereas the latter were politically motivated²²². Although it was pointed out how some elements pertinent to religion could be traced also in the terrorism of the Seventies, e. g. in Northern Ireland, where the fight between the unionist Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) sometimes assumed connotations of a religious conflict²²³. This unexpected aspect is justified by the “Wave” concept of Rapoport. According to the Professor, four phases, i.e. waves,

²¹⁹ William Braniff in Robin Wright, “How Different—and Dangerous—Is Terrorism Today?,” June 5, 2017, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-different-and-dangerous-is-terrorism-today>.

²²⁰ Bruce Hoffman quoted in Robin Wright, “How Different—and Dangerous—Is Terrorism Today?,”.

²²¹ Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, “After 9/11: Is It All Different Now?,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005): 262.

²²² Torbjørn Kveberg, “‘New Terrorism’ - Fact or Fiction? A Descriptive and Quantitative Analysis of Religious Terrorism Since 1985” (Norwegian University of Science and Technology Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management Department of Sociology and Political Science, 2012), 13.

²²³ Ahmad Hendy, “Debunking the Concept of ‘New Terrorism,’” *E-International Relations Students*, n.d., accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/05/11/debunking-the-concept-of-new-terrorism/>.

can be identified across centuries as far as terrorism is concerned²²⁴. The concept of wave is exploited in order to convey the irregular changes occurring in the period of time examined, '[...] characterized by expansion and contraction phases'²²⁵. Each wave takes its name by the dominant energy, i.e. ideology, but this doesn't mean that it is '[...] its only feature. Nationalist organizations in various numbers appear in all waves, for example, and each wave shaped its national elements differently'²²⁶. Rapoport's subdivision slightly differs from the one theorized by Bonanate and has an additional phase covering present days. Rapoport divides the terroristic phenomenon in this way²²⁷:

- the “Anarchist Wave”, corresponding to the Eighties of the Nineteenth century, approximately lasting forty years;
- the “Anti-colonial Wave”, starting in the 1920s till roughly 1960s;
- the “New Left Wave”, covering the period from the late 1960s to the 1990s;
- the “Religious Wave” made its appearance in 1979, year of the fall of the last Iranian Shah, Reza Pahlavi.

A difficult periodization of the terroristic phenomenon probably derives from the original problematic of its definition.

3.1.1 Terrorism: a problematic definition

What is essential as far as an outlook of the phenomenon of political terrorism is concerned is its definition, since, as the philosopher Giuliano Pontara noticed, it is important to point out a delimitation of the term able to distinguish it from other kinds of political violence, such as the guerrilla warfare or political murders²²⁸. The formulation of a definition is not purely a terminological exercise. Firstly, its research is pivotal for a fully understanding of the phenomenon, which can endow institutions—as well as groups of individuals—with instruments, by means of which fighting terrorism. Secondly, it is critical as far as the juridical level is concerned. Nowadays, the major

²²⁴ David C Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11(1)” (n.d.) in *Anthropoetics* VIII, no. 1 Spring/ Summer 2002, accessed August 1, 2019, <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/category/ap0801/>.

²²⁵ David C. Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism” quoted in Kveberg, ““New Terrorism’ - Fact or Fiction? A Descriptive and Quantitative Analysis of Religious Terrorism Since 1985,” 10.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

²²⁷ Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11(1),” 2.

²²⁸ Giuliano Pontara, “Violenza e Terrorismo. Il Problema Della Definizione e Della Giustificazione,” in *Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico: Aspetti Interni e Internazionali, Politici e Giuridici*, ed. Luigi Bonanate (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 1979), 36–37.

issue examined is whether terrorists should be considered soldiers or criminals²²⁹. This distinction is far from being only theoretical, on the contrary it involves practical and juridical consequences. Indeed, the first case would imply imprisonment, even before any trial, till the end of the “war of terror”, whereas the second case would entail a standard treatment as an ordinary citizen, respecting the civil rights of the individual²³⁰. It is also remarkable to establish an accurate definition so that it can be far from any ideological identification and ‘[...] terrorist methods can turn out to be both fighting methods led by revolutionaries and those led by armed forces and the police [...]’²³¹. Yet, since the inquiry about terrorism was launched, its definition represented a complex dispute. Reasons behind this difficulty are numerous. First of all, the term mirrors a negative meaning useful for a political propaganda, in order to delegitimize the counterpart. The term is even avoided by those who exploit violence following what is regarded to be a terroristic behaviour; conscious of the negative connotation, these persons prefer rather to call themselves “freedom fighters”²³².

A further obstacle to the establishment of a clear and precise definition is due to the blurred borders of the phenomenon. Indeed, the distinction between terrorism and other kinds of political violence like guerrilla, civil wars or coup is not so straightforward²³³. In the attempt of conceptualizing terrorism, it often occurs that—accidentally or not—an ethical judgment is made, so that the definition could mirror a specific standpoint. However, it could be useful to keep in mind some definitions and be aware of their limits.

A general description, which has anyway the credit of including the threat to the psychical sphere of the subjects was conceived by the Italian philosopher Giuliano Pontara:

[...] a terrorist act is every act, carried out as part of a political fighting method—that is, aiming at conquering or defending the state power – involving the use of extreme violence—the imposition

²²⁹ Amitai Etzioni, “Terrorists: A Distinct Species,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23 (January 1, 2011): 1–12.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

²³¹ Pontara, “Violenza e Terrorismo. Il Problema Della Definizione e Della Giustificazione,” 58. (My translation)

²³² Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, “The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 778.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 779.

of physical or psychical death, or physical or psychical sufferings and injuries—against innocent people— meaning not warriors [...].²³⁴

The more ambiguous the phenomenon is, the more compelling it is pinpointing a definition able to clarify its boundaries and establish delimitations. Professor Bonanate identifies ambiguity as the essential feature of political terrorism²³⁵. Indeed, both the rival parties involved in this violent phenomenon would accuse of terrorism the counterpart, so that institutions blame on revolutionaries, who undermine the State's existence; on the other side, revolutionaries justify their actions as reactions to the terror imposed by the State²³⁶. A further element of ambiguity of this particular kind of political violence is that factions involved are always stating the necessity and inevitability of their actions as justifications of their behaviour²³⁷. Thus, terrorism would be the final, inevitable step of the wider category of political violence, to which group of people or individuals resort in order to make political requests to the authority, requests that are no longer conveyable through the standard "social mechanism"; or it could also be the ultimate act of a political bargaining, in which the parties have recourse to violence in order to prove their ability and test their rival's capacity to cope with violence²³⁸. As Professor Bonanate explains: '[...] then terrorism would be the pathology of the political violence, the symptom of a stuck situation', the resulting condition when political requests and bargaining are refused by the parties²³⁹. Keeping in mind the main features of necessity and inevitability, Professor Bonanate comes to the following definition of the terrorist phenomenon:

[...] the definition of terrorism can be applied to all those expressions of violence, against which no possibility of bargaining is identified. Thus, terrorism— since its definition doesn't depend on the objective nature of the acts, but on the way they are judged by the addressee—will be that political violence, which doesn't allow any responses aiming at opening to political negotiations; lastly, terrorism is considered by those who believe that they cannot accept any compromise, which could avoid the total defeat of the rival. The terrorist situation is one in which any channel of political communication is interrupted, or rather unusable.²⁴⁰

As Pontara's definition, the above description of terrorism is far from any ideological interpretation and can include both State institutions and revolutionaries among

²³⁴ Pontara, "Violenza e Terrorismo. Il Problema Della Definizione e Della Giustificazione," 58.

²³⁵ Bonanate, "Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico," 99–101.

²³⁶ Ibid., 101.

²³⁷ Ibid., 103.

²³⁸ Ibid., 102.

²³⁹ Ibid., 102–103.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 104.

terrorists. What is relevant in Bonanate's definition is the recognition of the subjectivity of the act's nature; indeed, established that the interpretation of the deed is up to the addressee, what situates the act in the terrorism rank is the impossibility of negotiation. Both Pontara's and Bonanate's definitions were conceived during the culmination of the terrorist period in Italy, that is 1979. Nowadays, scholars and academics haven't come up with a solution of the terroristic issues yet, in fact it has actually assumed more complex shades, which have brought some scholars to device the concept of the "New Terrorism".

3.1.2 A further attempt in categorizing terrorism

A final categorization of the terrorist phenomenon, conceived by Professor Bonanate²⁴¹, considers four groups of terrorism, which are devised as a couple of choices. The first set, as the Professor explains, concerns the adequacy of the means exploited for the purpose. This set involves the strategic terrorism and the tactical terrorism. The first kind can be identified when three circumstances occur, that is a) a wide imbalance between the parts involved, b) the impossibility, according to whom resort to the act, of acting differently, c) the effectiveness of the chosen means. When these three circumstances occur and there is a constant resorting to terrorist acts, a strategy can be recognized. To the contrary, the tactical terrorism involves violent acts that are part of a wider fight, thus they are not the only instrument, which the parts resort to.

The second set of classification is the finalistic and instrumental terrorism. This categorization regards terrorism in relation to its goal, thus violent acts acted to directly achieve the wanted goal are expression of instrumental terrorism, whereas actions carried out in order to obtain more favorable conditions for the accomplishment of one's own purpose are categorized as belonging to the finalistic terrorism. Since actions carried out by the latter has no meaning in itself, making unstable the current situation is its only aim. Examples of this kind of terrorism are carried through with by the Red Brigades across the Seventies.

3.2 Terrorism in Italy

Internal terrorism hit Italy at the end of 1960s and across 1970s. It was not a homogenous phenomenon and this represented its peculiar feature. A first distinction

²⁴¹ Ibid., 134–148.

possible is between Black and Red Terrorism, respectively and simplistically far right-wing terrorism and left-wing terrorism. The first dates back to the very beginning of the Cold War but its actions were sporadic; around the turn of 1968 it got into action as a response to worker and student protests²⁴². Moreover, in those years Italian institutions were constantly menaced by the threat of a military coup—by the hands of Junio Valerio Borghese—destined to fail.

As far as Red Terrorism is concerned, the terrorist organization of the Red Brigades ended up monopolising the whole category. Perhaps it is a simplistic way of categorizing the left-wing terrorism, yet it matches the reality. The book *La mappa perduta*²⁴³ provides a thorough depiction of all the left-wing organizations active in Italy from 1969 to 1989. Although the terrorist groups that were counted in those years were myriad, the project carried out by the book's authors found that forty-seven were actually working and operative²⁴⁴. Among these, twenty-four were pointed out as the major organizations operating across the period of twenty years. Below it is reported, following a chronological order, a brief report of the main groups that contribute to swell the ranks of the Red Brigades²⁴⁵.

3.2.1 Gruppi d'Azione Partigiana-GAP

The history of the first left-wing clandestine armed organization is strictly linked to the controversial life of its founder, the Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

What can be easily said about Feltrinelli is that he was a billionaire belonging to the Milanese upper class, but a label doesn't fit for describing a complex man like Osvaldo—his nom de guerre. It is a common opinion that Feltrinelli by founding his armed organization GAP- Gruppi d'Azione Partigiana (Partisan Action Groups) was pursuing the aim of contrasting an imminent coup d'état²⁴⁶. The retraction of this conjecture came from a public statement read during the trial Gap-Feltrinelli held on March 31, 1979²⁴⁷. His armed struggle was not only directed to contrast a possible coup, yet it was part of a global 'Communist and anti-imperialist strategy'²⁴⁸, which could rely on revolutionary

²⁴² Giorgio Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978* (Milano: Rubbettino Editore, 1979), 51.

²⁴³ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 33–219.

²⁴⁶ Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 28–29.

²⁴⁷ Ventura and Fumian, *Per una storia del terrorismo italiano*, 39–40.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 40.

vanguards in Asia, Africa, Latin American, and on the fundamental component of this strategy provided by the military force of the Soviet Union²⁴⁹. The trust in the Soviet Union was the discriminating factor between the GAP on one hand and the Red Brigades and Potere Operaio (Worker's Power)²⁵⁰ on the other. Nevertheless, disagreement about this matter did not prevent collaboration among these organizations and when the GAP ceased to exist, guns were distributed between the Red Brigades and Potere Operaio.

At the beginning of their armed campaign, between September and October 1970, the GAP signed sabotages against building sites, where mortal accidents at the expense of workers happened. More relevant deeds were carried out between the end of 1970 and the beginning of 1971: by the means of some modified radios, the group succeeded in interfering with national radio channels in order to gather other organizations to be employed for the common struggle²⁵¹. Collaboration in cities like Trento, Genoa, Turin and Milan were created.

The GAP could also boast international collaborations. Feltrinelli took part in the organization of the killing of the Bolivian consul Roberto Quintanilla, former police chief in Bolivia and regarded by revolutionaries responsible for the arrest and the killing of Ernesto "Che" Guevara²⁵². The gun Monika Ertl used to kill Roberto Quintanilla on April 1, 1972 in Hamburg was the property of Feltrinelli²⁵³.

With Giangiacomo Feltrinelli's death on March 14, 1972 and the arrest of the last two militants a month later, GAP died out.

3.2.2 Gruppo XXII Ottobre

Like GAP, the XXII October group was also part of the ranks of Marxist-Leninists. It was established on October 22, 1969 in Genoa by Mario Rossi, Augusto Viel, Giuseppe Battaglia, Adolfo Sanguineti and Alfredo Maino²⁵⁴. It counted among its ranks

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 40–41.

²⁵⁰ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 33.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 34.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Andrea Tarquini, "Quella Pistola Di Feltrinelli Che Vendicò Che Guevara - La Repubblica.It," last modified April 21, 2009, accessed September 3, 2019, <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/04/21/quella-pistola-di-feltrinelli-che-vendico-che.html>.

²⁵⁴ Antonio Marino, "La Banda 'XXII Ottobre' a Genova e La Malavita Come Terrorismo - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence," accessed September 3, 2019, <http://gnosis.aisi.gov.it/gnosis/Rivista6.nsf/ServNavig/11>.

proletarians coming from the Genoese Valley Val Bisagno. The group's struggle concerned the Collective Labour Agreements, which was a main issue in the period between 1968 and 1970; the group was also propagator of the fight against Genoese industrialists, regarded to be the embodiment of the new Fascist oppression²⁵⁵. Radio interferences during the newscast, explosive attacks against the office of the Partito Socialista Unitario (Unitary Socialist Party), against the US general consulate—considered the principal author of the spread around the world of imperialism—kidnapping for financing purposes, together with sabotages to industrial sites in Genoese area²⁵⁶. In 1971 the group's militants were captured or fugitive. After their capture, a steadfast campaign was led against those groups more offensive. The Red Brigades with the kidnapping of the judge Mario Sossi—crown prosecutor against the group XXII October in the first instance trial—aimed at claiming the belonging of the group to the revolutionary process and requested their release²⁵⁷.

3.2.3 Nuclei Armati Proletari-NAP

In the wake of the student and worker protest, a new experience in the Italian landscape developed: prisons in the biggest Italian cities are shaken by recurring uprisings against the prison system. What is peculiar of this organization is the encounter between political fight and social fight: prisoners acquired political consciousness thanks to political militants, key players in the student and worker riots²⁵⁸. Their cultural indoctrination was based on the revolutionary Marxism-Leninism ideology and regarding contemporary influence, it involved works by Frantz Fanon and Eldridge Cleaver²⁵⁹, leading figure of the Black Panther Party. Prisons were considered the outcome of the capitalism system and social inequality. Political avant-gardes started spreading among prisoners and some of these were supported by organizations like Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid) and by the far-left extra-parliamentary organization Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle), which had a specific commission for what concerned

²⁵⁵ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 41.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

²⁵⁸ "Il Terrorismo in Italia Negli Anni Settanta. I Nuclei Armati Proletari Ovvero Carcere e Mitra - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence," accessed September 6, 2019, <http://gnosis.aisi.gov.it/gnosis/Rivista7.nsf/ServNavig/21>.

²⁵⁹ Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 67.

prisons²⁶⁰. Between 1972 and 1973, the prison abolition movement made clear its will to move to the clandestine armed struggle in order to overthrow the prison system and free prisoners belonging to the movement²⁶¹. Following these demands, Lotta Continua's support failed and many militants left the organization²⁶². It goes back to this period the formation, in Florence and Naples, of the original group of the Nuclei Armati Proletari, which counted among its ranks ex-prisoners and students²⁶³. Actually, as reported in the account written by the journalist Bocca, group's composition was very peculiar, since it was mixed: there were both militants like Giovanni Gentile Schiavone and Maria Pia Vianale belonging to bourgeois families and combatants like Giuseppe "Sergio" Romeo, who spent his adolescence in the reformatory²⁶⁴. During its activity period— from 1974 to 1977— the Nuclei Armati Proletari group led varied subversive actions, which almost immediately counted fatalities among the group's militants²⁶⁵. It was a peculiarity of the group to install loudspeaker—ready to blow up once the message was broadcasted— outside the prisons, exalting the subversive struggle in prisons²⁶⁶.

The Nuclei Armati Proletari group seemed to be informed with the same fight method of the Red Brigades: raids against the offices of the Christian Union Business Leader (Unione Cristiana Imprenditori Dirigenti) and of the Christian Democracy, together with the kidnapping formula—on this point, it is to remember the kidnapping of the magistrate Giuseppe Di Gennaro—followed by the claim of responsibility according to the self-interview scheme²⁶⁷. Yet, the difference between the two organizations existed and concerned both the logistic level and the ideological level, as well. As far as the first is concerned, the Red Brigades relied on the strict distinction and autonomy among its pillars, whereas the Nuclei Armati Proletari's branches relied completely on the section based in Naples²⁶⁸. As regards militants, the Red Brigades is more selective than Nuclei Armati Proletari and even if prisons are exploited for revolutionary use, selection is

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 69.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 65.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 69–70.

²⁶⁵ "Il Terrorismo in Italia Negli Anni Settanta. I Nuclei Armati Proletari Ovvero Carcere e Mitra - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence."

²⁶⁶ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 65–66.

²⁶⁷ Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 71–73.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

rigid²⁶⁹. On the other hand there is the use of explosive, widely exploited by the NAP but firmly rejected by the Red Brigades because of its negative effect on the public opinion²⁷⁰. Yet, despite the differences, the NAP and the Red Brigades collaborated for a period²⁷¹.

In 1977, the experience of the NAP ceased to exist and some militants flew into the Red Brigades. Together with the workforce, weapons and hideouts were acquired by the Red Brigades.

3.2.4 Formazioni Comuniste Armate-FCA²⁷²

Formazioni Comuniste Armate (Armed Communist Formations) is also among the main organizations that swelled the ranks of the Red Brigades' militants.

The origin of the group can be traced to the dissolution of the Potere Operaio (Workers' Power), a radical left-wing Italian political group, during the spring of 1973. The latter was split in several committees, the most remarkable of which was the Comitato Comunista di Centocelle (Centocelle Communist Committee), in the Roman District. Some militants belonging to this group, together with members from the other Communist Committees, decided to establish a clandestine organization active throughout the national territory: it was the constituent moment of the group in 1975.

The group was the author of various attacks against diverse giants of the telecommunications field and oil sphere, as well.

The Formazioni Comuniste Armate got in touch with the Red Brigades in the second half of 1975, when the latter established for the first time their new pillar in Rome. This was the starting point of the exodus from the group Formazioni Comuniste Armate: some of the militants founded new revolutionary groups, others like Valerio Morucci joined the Red Brigades.

3.2.5 Brigate Rosse-BR

The Red Brigades represented the foremost long-running Italian armed group, indeed it has been active for nearly twenty years— from 1970 to 1988— although not with a unitary

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 71.

²⁷⁰ "Il Terrorismo in Italia Negli Anni Settanta. I Nuclei Armati Proletari Ovvero Carcere e Mitra - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence."

²⁷¹ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 66.

²⁷² Ibid., 74–80.

history. It will be pointed out how the organization evolved in three different phases during its lifetime.

Far from wanting to flatten the Italian terrorist scenario to a single armed organization, the Red Brigades had a crucial role in Italian history in those years labelled “years of lead”. The Kidnapping and murder they led against the President of Christian Democracy Aldo Moro showed Italy and the entire Europe how they could represent a direct danger for Italian State and its institutions.

Their development as an organization has been gradual and went at the same pace of their selection of the target to be hit: at first, bombs attacks against factory facilities and goods owned by company managers; at a later time, individuals were victims of kidnappings and summary trials, conducted by the so called “people’s court”²⁷³.

The goal of the original unit of the Red Brigades, according to their words, was the establishment of the Partito Armato del Proletariato (Armed Party of the Proletariat), the final fulfilment of the people’s will to power²⁷⁴. It was the response to the militarization of the State, to the suppression of the proletarian revolution, which was firmly hindered by the “Gaullist fascism” of the bourgeoisie, which had the appearance of a democracy, but actually it had already deployed its repressive army²⁷⁵. This manifesto was announced in a booklet appeared a year after the establishment of the Red Brigades, in September 1971. In this booklet they also recognized the revolutionary experience in metropolitan cities as the path to be taken in order to cope with the militarization of the bourgeoisie²⁷⁶, since

the city is today the heart of the system, the organizing center of political and economic exploitation [...]. But it is also the weakest point of the system, where contradictions appear more acute [...]. it is here in his heart that the system must be hit.²⁷⁷

Thus, according to their militants, the undertaking of a metropolitan guerrilla, which has to be led in line with the Marxist-Leninist ideology; nevertheless, as the journalist Giorgio Bocca noticed, their activity has to be connected to the war communism, the

²⁷³ Renzo Paternoster, “L’Ombra Della Stella Storia Delle Brigate Rosse” (n.d.), accessed September 15, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/35067334/Lombra_della_stella_Storia_delle_Brigate_Rosse.

²⁷⁴ Soccorso Rosso, “Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hanno Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto,” accessed September 16, 2019, <http://www.bibliotecamarxista.org/autori/soccorso%20rosso.htm>.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Collettivo Metropolitano, *Dichiarazione 1969*, in Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 18–19.

same one that affected the main dictators-generals, like Stalin and Castro, instead of the Leninist style²⁷⁸. The latter, indeed, approved terrorism as a mean of fight, but it should be undertaken only at a certain point of the class conflict, not at the starting phase of the battle²⁷⁹. On the contrary, the Red Brigades exploited terrorism as a method of struggle from the beginning, stating that this was the only way to conduct politics in Italy²⁸⁰.

Although militants payed specific attention to the needs of the working class—from the occupation of the houses to the subscription of the means of transport to reach the workplace—their real goal always came to light in their leaflets:

We take by means of violence THE POWER: because only the logic of TAKE pays! [...] But comrades, the struggle of the commuter proletariat [...] is only a moment of the assault on the power of the pigs, for a proletarian power that, alone, can satisfy our real interests²⁸¹.

An attack on the power, which gradually would increasingly correspond to an attack on the State. The previous excerpt belongs to an article appeared in the periodical *Sinistra Proletaria* (Proletarian Left), which at first was only the title of a periodical published by the Collettivo Politico Metropolitano (Metropolitan Political Organization)—a left-wing organization active in Milan since 1969—and then turned out to be the organization itself. The change in name had probably to do with the efforts the Collettivo Politico Metropolitano faced because of the presence in the city of other numerous left-wing organs characterized by a different stamp compared to the Collettivo Politico Metropolitano: organizations like Movimento Studentesco (Student Movement) and Avanguardia Operaia (Workers Avant-garde) driven by a revisionist hallmark, or Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle) promoter of the Workerism theory²⁸². Thus the problem was probably linked to the level of participation, i.e. the number of militants, which increased up to 150²⁸³. Moreover, a further transformation is recognisable in the conversion to the armed struggle²⁸⁴. In the periodicals appeared between July and August 1970 it is constantly mentioned the necessity for the proletarian left to organize itself into a group in order to lead its violence to the proletarian victory: ‘we have also

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 37.

²⁷⁹ Bonanate, “Dimensioni Del Terrorismo Politico,” 117.

²⁸⁰ Bocca, *Il Terrorismo Italiano 1970/1978*, 36–37.

²⁸¹ Sinistra Proletaria, *Prendiamoci i trasporti*, Foglio di Lotta February 1971 cit. in Soccorso Rosso, “Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hano Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto.”

²⁸² Andrea Saccoman, “Le Origini Delle Brigate Rosse in Base a Nuove Acquisizioni Documentarie,” *Italia Contemporanea*, no. 279 (2015): 578.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

understood that it is not enough to make peaceful strikes, calm demonstrations [...]. Now we must understand that proletarian violence must be organized. Better than our class enemy'²⁸⁵. As a response to the need for a greater coordination and the will to pursue the revolutionary activity in secrecy, a new group was set up: the Red Brigades. A leaflet circulating in October 1970 announced the start of the Red Brigades activity: 'Red autumn has already begun. Examples are: [...] the appearance of autonomous workers' organizations (Red Brigades) that represents the first moments of proletarian self-organization, aiming at confronting the bosses and their servants on their own turf "on an even footing'²⁸⁶.

The organization that will become the Red Brigades was officially set up in the province of Reggio Emilia in August 1970 by eighty representatives of Sinistra Proletaria and Collettivo Politico Metropolitano²⁸⁷. The first group was made of some militants of the student movement belonging to the University of Trento—among them, Curcio, Cagol and Semeria—members of the Emilian FGCI (Italian Communist Youth Federation), that is Franceschini, Gallinari and Ognibene, together with some workers mainly belonging to the Sit-Siemens, among which Moretti stood out²⁸⁸.

In this constant request for a coordination within the group, the Red Brigades chose to adopt a paramilitary structure that reminded that of a National Liberation Army²⁸⁹. Their conformation was the outcome of a response caused by the first setback they had to face: on 2 May 1972 the Italian Police, thanks to the statements of the justice collaborator Marco Pisetta, found the Milanese hideout of the Red Brigades and confiscated numerous important documents²⁹⁰. The bulk of the organization was arrested. Only ten of the "regular" militants were free, among them Franceschini, Moretti, Curcio and Cagol²⁹¹. As a consequence of this attack, the group converted to the total illegality, which was considered the only effective way to fight the enemy in

²⁸⁵ Sinistra Proletaria, "*Dopo Le Ferie La Ripresa*," Foglio di Lotta, August 1970.

²⁸⁶ Sinistra Proletaria, Foglio di Lotta, 20 October 1970 cit. in Soccorso Rosso, "Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hano Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto."

²⁸⁷ Paternoster, "L''Ombra Della Stella Storia Delle Brigate Rosse."

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Roberto Bartali, "Brigate Rosse, Partito Comunista Combattente," 73–74, accessed September 19, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/25711234/Brigate_Rosse_partito_comunista_combattente.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

the imperialistic metropolis²⁹². In this choice, the Red Brigades were informed by the Latin-American experience of the Tupamaros, a left-wing urban guerrilla group active in Uruguay in those years²⁹³. At the top of the organization, the Red Brigades conceived two organs, the Strategic Directorate and the Executive Committee, with managerial and administrative tasks, respectively²⁹⁴. The first was concerned with indicating the ideological guidelines and was made up of the members of the Executive Committee and representatives of each Fronts and Columns; the latter had various responsibility: first of all it made sure that the political guidelines of the Strategic Directorate were realized, secondly, it considered every projects coming from each Fronts, and finally it managed funds²⁹⁵. Directly depending on the Executive Committee although autonomous on the logistic field, the Column was the operating arm of the Red Brigades and carried out the actions approved by the Executive Committee²⁹⁶. The very local organ of the organization were the brigades, groups involved in collecting information about the chosen target²⁹⁷. A further structure's unit was the Front, a section of the Red Brigades in charge of the conception and development of campaigns regarding a specific fields of the Italian Country²⁹⁸. Between the autumn 1973 and the spring 1974, the Front branched out into three sectors²⁹⁹:

- the large factory sector (settore delle grandi fabbriche): involved in the conception of the factory struggles. The Milanese sector stood out between 1973 and the beginning of 1974. The Nuclei Operai di Resistenza Armata (Workers Nuclei of Armed Resistance)– NORA had short life but were effective in their actions³⁰⁰.
- sector of the fight against counter-revolution (settore della lotta alla controrivoluzione): it organized campaigns against the State organs, which

²⁹² Soccorso Rosso, “Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hano Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto.”

²⁹³ Francesco Cesare Strangio, *Brigate Rosse* (LULU.COM, 2017), 67.

²⁹⁴ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 48–51.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 48–49.

²⁹⁶ “I Percorsi Dell’ideologia B.R.: 1^ e 2^ Posizione - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence,” accessed September 20, 2019, <http://gnosis.aisi.gov.it/Gnosis/Rivista2.nsf/servnavig/7>.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 49.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

hindered the revolutionary process, i.e. the police, the judiciary, the political parties considered enemies of the revolution.

- the logistic sector: it handled and provided the means to be used during campaigns.

In the wake of the uproars in the Italian prisons, a fourth front was launched: the Prisons Front, whose concern was leading the organization of the struggle against the prison system³⁰¹, which was extremely severe, hierarchical even among prisoners, and corrupted. This activity was led in cooperation with the Nuclei Armati Proletari³⁰².

The organization appeared well-structured with every branch in charge of specific aspects and with focused tasks. Probably, this was the secret of its long-life, but certainly it was the cause of the periodic disagreements inflaming the ranks of the group. During 1976, the organization's structure underwent a further change, which signed the transition to the attack on "the heart of the State": the large factory sector was included in the sector of the fight against counter-revolution³⁰³.

As already said, the operations led by the Red Brigades met two distinct phases: the first, coinciding with the beginning of their activity, mainly addressed to managers of the main Italian factories—Sit-Siemens, Pirelli, Alfa Romeo, FIAT—or to union officials, whereas the second period focused on hitting State personalities. Nonetheless, their actions were never detached from the national historical context. Their first kidnapping was at the expense of the Milanese Sit-Siemens' manager Idalgo Macchiarini, on 3 March 1972. In the leaflet following the kidnapping, he was accused of being a neofascist, oppressor of the workers there in the Sit-Siemens³⁰⁴. Opinions on this action were contrasting in the extralegal environment, whereas democratic parties wanted to distance themselves from this coercive method. The Communist Italian Party stated that this 'phantom organization' wanted to involve workers and trade unions in their actions, which had nothing to do with the labor movement, and foster the strategy of tension³⁰⁵. A year later, on 12 February 1973 in Turin, it was Bruno Labate's turn, a union official of the CISNAL (General Labor Union) a trade union linked to the Movimento Sociale

³⁰¹ "I Percorsi Dell'ideologia B.R.: 1^ e 2^ Posizione - GNOSIS - Rivista Italiana Di Intelligence."

³⁰² Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 50–51.

³⁰³ Ibid., 51.

³⁰⁴ Soccorso Rosso, "Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hanno Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto."

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

Italiano (Italian Socialist Movement), a neo-fascist political party. The event was the outcome of a tense situation, created as a result of the negotiations for the contract for the metalworkers. In 1972, the fascist presence in the factories as well as in the outside world made its voice heard: it has the neo-fascist hallmark the bomb attack to trains carrying workers to Reggio Calabria, where a manifestation was organized by the trade unions in October 1972³⁰⁶. 1972 and 1973 were characterized by frequent turmoil within FIAT factory mainly due to the conflicts between red and fascist workers, the latter accused of being spies working for the “boss”³⁰⁷. Agnelli, for his part, carried out a redundancy policies against workers considered unruly³⁰⁸. Moreover, beyond Labate’s kidnapping there were doubts, raised by the left-wing, about an agreement between the FIAT and CISNAL, aiming at positioning people among the workers ranks in order to control and hinder the riots’ organisers³⁰⁹. The suspect were confirmed by the union official himself during the interrogatory led by the Red Brigades³¹⁰. The same year, the Red Brigades will be the authors of two further kidnappings, which will involve Alfa Romeo’s manager Michele Mincuzzi in Milan and Ettore Amerio, FIAT chief of staff, in Turin. The first kidnapping occurred on 28 June 1973, in the aftermath of Andreotti’s resignation, which will have made a way for a centre-left government with Mariano Rumor as Prime Minister³¹¹. The kidnapping of the engineer Mincuzzi represented the first step of the fight against the Christian Democracy considered the safe house of the modern-years fascists, a fight inaugurated with the raid on the offices of the UCID, an apolitical organization gathering Christian entrepreneur and managers, occurred in January of the same year³¹². Amerio’s kidnapping was the continuation of the Labate’s, since the union official revealed that the chief of staff was in charge of the hiring of those people recommended by the CISNAL. Thus, it was an answer to both the widespread corruption in FIAT and the threat of the unemployment benefits exploited in the context of the negotiation for the company contract³¹³. Moreover, in the leaflet

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Lucrezia Cominelli, *L'Italia Sotto Tutela. Stati Uniti, Europa e Crisi Italiana Degli Anni Settanta*. (Milano: Le Monnier università Mondadori education, 2014), 129.

³¹² Soccorso Rosso, “Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hano Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto.”

³¹³ Ibid.

appeared the same day of the kidnapping, the Red Brigades stated the incompatibility of the armed fight with the “historic compromise”, the political alliance proposed by Berlinguer in the aftermath of the Chilean coup occurred in September 1973³¹⁴. Probably, in that year, proletariat felt confused because of these political guidelines, to which it should be added the conference having as speakers Umberto Agnelli, FIAT manager and Giorgio Amendola, a member of the Communist Italian Party. The conference was held in Bologna in April of the same year and represented a moment of dialogue between the most representative of the Italian capitalism and the leading party among left-wing bloc³¹⁵.

The starting point of the attack on the State coincides with the kidnapping of the magistrate Mario Sossi, Public Prosecutor in the trial of the “XXII October Group”, particularly severe against the left-wing organizations. The passage from the fabric to the State conflict occurred quite soon, that is a year later, in April 1974 and lasted, formally, till the kidnapping of the magistrate of the Ministry of Justice, Giovanni D’Urso in December 1980³¹⁶. The action against Sossi is to be placed in the frame of the abrogative referendum on the divorce law, which was the first sign of a shift to left of the electorate, a shift reinforced during the local and national election of 1975 and 1976, respectively. In their view, the Red Brigades were acting as a response to the establishment of a “Neo-Gaullist Fascism”³¹⁷.

The Red Brigades’ actions would be tightened further after the arrest of the original unit of the organization and the fight would be harsher than ever, with numerous murders, till the sadly famous Moro case, which will be discussed in the last chapter.

3.3 Political violence: an intertwined network

Studying this decade, a question rouse spontaneously: how is it possible that political violence had such a spread? How can it be explained that much of this phenomenon was delimited to the domestic territories, despite of the clamour provoked by international terrorism, such as the Palestinian conflict?

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Giuseppe Iannini, “Review of Sistema Industriale e Sviluppo Economico in Italia,” *Il Politico* 39, no. 1 (1974): 147.

³¹⁶ Progetto Memoria, *La mappa perduta*, 49–55.

³¹⁷ Soccorso Rosso, “Brigate Rosse. Che Cosa Hanno Fatto, Che Cosa Hano Detto, Che Cosa Se Ne è Detto.”

Left-wing organizations with Marxist-Leninist background were the most active across the world, mainly because of the cultural legacy left by the cultural movement of the late 1960s³¹⁸. The rising disillusionment towards the Soviet Union, responsible of the violent repression in Prague and within its territories, was combined with the disgruntlement caused by the failure of the Mao's experiment and the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia: the collapse of these experiences left the most extremist fringes of the late 1960s students movements without guide and control³¹⁹. The Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Faction (RAF) in West Germany and the Action Directe in France were all representatives of the so called Red Terrorism, each endowed with peculiarities linked to their Countries. Simultaneously, there were groups committed to the nationalist cause as the IRA in the Northern Ireland and the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain, fighting for the independence of the Basque population. Left-wing terrorism was not the only example of political violence active at the time: right-wing groups existed as well and were active in the early 1980s³²⁰.

It was proved the link between these organizations—also those belonging to the right wing—and the Soviet Union. Since the early 1960s the KGB organized terrorism training courses in the Soviet territories and tried to took control over the existing extremist groups³²¹. The Soviet Union's aim was probably to destabilise Western Countries from the inside and prove the inefficiency of the capital system³²². It was interesting to notice the network it succeeded to create. The Soviet Union firstly supported and then strongly relied on nationalist Palestinian groups as the link between Soviet Union and Marxist-Leninist groups around the world: their role was to deliver the Soviet funds among those groups³²³. There are also evidence that witnessed how the Soviet Union charged the STASI—the State Security Service of the German Democratic Republic—with the task of training terrorist groups and as the General of the STASI stated among those

³¹⁸ Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, *Storia Contemporanea. Il Novecento* (Bari: Laterza, 2012), 316–317.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Stefan Aubrey, *The New Dimension of International Terrorism* (Zuerich: Hochschulverlag an der ETH, 2004), 45.

³²¹ Ph D. Roberto Bartali, “L'ombra Di Yalta Sugli Anni Di Piombo: Le Origini Del Fenomeno Brigatista Nel Contesto Italiano Ed Internazionale” (n.d.): 238–239, accessed September 25, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/25710973/L_ombra_di_Yalta_sugli_anni_di_piombo_Le_origini_del_fenomeno_brigatista_nel_contesto_italiano_ed_internazionale.

³²² Ibid., 239.

³²³ Ibid., 241.

groups there were the Palestine Liberation Organization, the German RAF, the Irish IRA and the Basque ETA³²⁴. Italian groups maintained these kind of relationships as well and members of the Potere Operaio and the Red Brigades attended the summer courses held in Lebanon³²⁵.

³²⁴ Ibid., 244.

³²⁵ Ibid., 246–247.

4 The outbreak of political violence: a British perspective

The analysis carried out through the previous chapters is meant to provide an historical framework of Italy and Great Britain during the 1970s. Both countries were examined in their international context in the attempt to underline their relevance in the worldwide scene, despite of their perpetual condition as ‘sick men’. Their reputation as ‘sick’ countries was connected to their domestic problems concerning the economic and political landscape, which were characterized by a continuing instability on account of structural elements and unfortunate juncture as well.

Uncertainty marked the endurance of the social fabric as well, from which internal subversive events arouse, threatening the safety of the country. It was mentioned in the third chapter how terrorism could take on different shapes depending on its target and its aim. Political reasons—together with religious and ethnical causes—justified the widespread violence so common in both the Western and the Eastern countries during the 1970s. Indeed, terrorism represented such a huge matter of concern to governments and citizens in the period between the end of the 1960s and the first half of the 1980s, that those years were labelled by some scholars as ‘the age of terrorism’³²⁶, with reference to the title of a work by Walter Laqueur³²⁷, one of the most prominent academics on this issue.

As far as political violence is concerned, Italy represented a peculiar case among other European countries, since ‘no other industrial society in the world has experienced such a long, widespread, violent and well-established terrorism like the one experienced in Italy’³²⁸. However, it shall be bore in mind that the Italian terrorism of the 1970s had political origins, and that the previous statement kept out terrorism with nationalistic or religious aims—like actions conducted by the IRA, the PLO or Islamist extremist groups—which includes examples of a more long-running terrorist phenomenon.

Hence, in this thesis work the attention is focused on political violence. Far from wanting to restrict the 1970s to the sole terrorist phenomenon, the latter actually played a fundamental role in the Italian history, ultimately succeeding in hitting the established

³²⁶ Giovanni Mario Ceci, *Il terrorismo italiano: storia di un dibattito* (Roma: Carrocci, 2014), II.

³²⁷ Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Little, Brown, 1987).

³²⁸ Ventura and Fumian, *Per una storia del terrorismo italiano*, 3 (traduzione mia).

institutional power through the abduction and murder of the President of the Christian Democracy, Aldo Moro.

The second issue to be clarified is the reason behind the choice of a British point of view about this matter. The second chapter attempted to show the importance Italy had on British foreign policy, particularly as far as European context was concerned. British diplomatic documents are rich of proof witnessing the key role Italy had on supporting Britain within the Community context. The Head of the Western European Department of the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO), David Gladstone, commented in a confidential documents of June 1979 that '[...] Italy [was] [their] major ally in [their] attempts to reform the EEC budget and the CAP and to bring about greater convergence', thus confirming that '[...] the Italian dimension in [their] Community interests [had] grown significantly in recent months'.

By virtue of the crucial part Italy had on negotiations regarding common political goals within the Community, HMG showed '[...] a lot of "instant" Ministerial curiosity about Italian politics', which caused considerable concern not so much for the prospect of a Communist participation in the government as for the continuing general instability suffered by its governmental institutions and its society³²⁹.

In this final chapter a close examination of British diplomatic documents and articles of the British press will show the interest in the Italian phenomenon of terrorism by HMG. Briefing notes on the diplomatic documents are required. They were gained from the website 'Margaret Thatcher Foundation'³³⁰, a useful source that offers free access to numerous historical documents pertaining to the Thatcher period. Unfortunately, official reports uploaded to the website and pertaining to the theme of terrorism date back to after 1978, thus part of the first 1970s could not be reconstructed through diplomatic documents. It is also true that 1978 was the year that marked the turning point in the Italian history, in general, and in the fight against political violence in particular. From that year on, the interest of London in law and order in the Italian country sharply intensified.

³²⁹ Bentivoglio, "Violenza Endemica o Eterodiretta? Il Terrorismo Italiano Degli Anni Settanta e Ottanta Visto Da Londra," 207.

³³⁰ "Margaret Thatcher Foundation."

It was attempted to fix this flaw in the paragraph titled ‘Political violence through the decade’, in which British newspaper articles on Italy were employed in order to provide an account of the terrorist phenomenon over the 1970s.

The newspapers examined were ‘The Times’, ‘The Guardian’ and the weekly publication ‘The Observer’. The choice fell on them after an essay of Giovanna Farrell-Vinay³³¹, according to which ‘The Times’ and ‘The Guardian’ were the British newspaper that showed more interest in Italy during the 1970s.

4.1 Italian terrorism through British diplomatic documents

By the end of the examined decade, terrorism was a crucial matter to be tackled. Italy had already experienced the darkest event of its republican history with the murder of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in 1978, whereas Britain would suffer a terrorist attack by the IRA against Lord Mountbatten a year later, in which the British statesman would lose his life. The need of understanding this phenomenon was so pressing that a sub-committee on terrorism was created during the Second Party Leaders Conference of the European Democrat Union in the aftermath of Lord Mountbatten’s murder. The sub-committee had the task of analysing ‘[...] the phenomenon of terrorism, its basis and aspects’ not only ‘[...] in its narrow sense, but also with its sociological background, e.g. in respect to the development of the youth’.

These guidelines can be traced in several records by the British Consulate General in Milan, going back to the Italian general elections in June 1979. These documents were the outcome of ‘[...] researches into the political and social attitudes in the north of Italy’³³², primarily aiming at examining the work of local councils controlled by both Christian Democrats and Communists, in the attempt at understanding whether the ‘historical compromise’ had any positive results at provincial and regional level. However, among questions relating to local and national politics and the state of the city economy, law and order turned out to be an urgent issue. British diplomats’ concern over terrorism was expressed in their questions asked in each northern Italian cities they visited. Paul H. Scott, the Consul-General in Milan in the period from 1977 to 1980, collected the bulk of information relating to this matter and what came to light during

³³¹ Giovanna Farrell-Vinay, “Lo specchio europeo: l’Italia vista dalla stampa britannica,” in *Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta: tra Guerra Fredda e Distensione*, ed. Agostino Giovagnoli and Silvio Pons (Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro): Rubbettino Editore, 2003), 479–490.

³³² TNA, FCO 33-4048, INF 017/1 Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 9 July 1979.

conversations with council representatives was the shared belief of the key role universities had as hotbed for terrorists recruitment and indoctrination.

In a conversation with the Prefect of Pavia, Dr Vincenzo Vicari—who ‘struck [the British diplomat] as one of the most intelligent and open-minded of Italian officials in [his] experience’³³³—Paul H. Scott reported Vicari’s analysis on crime and violence in Pavia. In the Prefect’s words, students in the city were ‘serious and hardworking and created no problems of law and order’. Nevertheless police should not let down its guard, because terrorists could take advantage of the city’s reputation and chose it as a base—as it actually happened—confident of the minimal supervision by authorities. The Council-General Scott came to the same conclusion with the Prefect of Ferrara on a visit paid by the British diplomat to the local official in June 1979. Although Ferrara was free from terrorism, the Prefect kept constantly on the alert the police, since terrorists could come in the city from the outside attracted by a likely lack of vigilance³³⁴. The reason behind the absence of any kind of terrorist activity in the city lay in the small reality of the University of Ferrara, which ‘was free from the problem of the larger universities such as Bologna’³³⁵. Despite of the non-violent hallmark of the cultural life in the city university, the high rate of unemployment among young people, seriously worried the local officials, who feared that the youngest part of the population could resort to political violence. This opinion was shared at national level as well. Indeed, once asked about the Italian situation during a phone call with the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the Italian President Sandro Pertini expressed his ‘two major preoccupation’, that is ‘unemployment and terrorism’, specifying that ‘unemployment, especially amongst the young was a dangerous phenomenon in Italy’, since ‘unemployed youths turned to drugs and got involved in crime, including terrorism’³³⁶.

Yet, unemployment was a problem concerning southern regions as well, but there the terrorist phenomenon did not take root, except for some sporadic events. Indeed, in some reports describing her diplomatic trip to the South of Italy, the British diplomat

³³³ TNA, FCO 33-4048, copy of records of conversations with Prefects in Pavia, Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 17 July 1979.

³³⁴ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Visit to Ferrara 14 and 15 June 1979, Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 19 June 1979.

³³⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

³³⁶ TNA, PREM 19/88, Italy: Record of conversation (MT-President Pertini of Italy, Arculus, 5 October 1979).

Kathryn Colvin from the Atlantic Region Research Department pointed out that in Basilicata ‘crime rate was very low’, identifying the cause in the absence of a university in the region³³⁷.

4.2 Political violence: a North-South conflict related phenomenon?

As far as the division North-South of the nation was concerned, British documents showed a close attention to the social conflict that was revealing its dramatic outcomes in those years. Although internal migration in Italy had not come to a standstill, it considerably slowed down by the mid-1970s³³⁸. Thus, the change occurred in Northern cities within the social fabric became evident at the end of the decade, uncovering a serious split between natives and Southern people, relating to both economy and culture.

The British diplomat Paul H. Scott noted during his trip to the regions of Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna that the North and South issue was deeply rooted in the mind of Italian population. The Northern contempt for the regions in the South involved not only their people—with Northern men and women complaining that ‘it was a disaster that most Italian emigrants living abroad came from the South and therefore gave a false and unfortunate impression of what Italians were really like’³³⁹—but the central government in Rome as well, giving ‘evidence of a dangerous irresponsibility’³⁴⁰. The British diplomat judged the nature of this conflict similar to a ‘Hitlerian racialism’, admitting that ‘it is a strong phrase but [he] chose it deliberately to attempt to convey the way in which people in the North [spoke] about the Southerners with disgust or contempt as though they were some sort of inferior species which was barely human’³⁴¹. Some of the prejudices held by Italian Northerners against Southern people were regarded unfair by British officials, since most of the comments—regarding, for instance, the squalor of the big cities as Milan and Turin—had to be ascribed to the effects of the increasing industrialization affecting metropolises.

³³⁷ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Familiarisation visit to Naples, Basilicata and Milan, Colvin to Harborne, WRJ 014/2, 8 May 1979.

³³⁸ Matteo Sanfilippo, “Tipologie Dell’Emigrazione Di Massa,” in *Storia Dell’Emigrazione Italiana*, vol. 1 (Donzelli Editore, 2001), 90.

³³⁹ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division in Italy, despatch (014/3) Scott to Arculus, WRJ 014/2, 5 July 1979.

³⁴⁰ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division in Italy, telegram (15a) Goodison to Scott, WRJ 014/2, 26 July 1979.

³⁴¹ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division in Italy, telegram (014/3) Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 6 August 1979.

What is interesting herein is the debate, encouraged within the British embassy, on a likely correlation between the North-South issue and terrorism. This connection was suggested to Paul H. Scott by some talks he had with local officials working in the North of the country. In a visit he paid to the Prefect of Cremona Dr Michele Barile, the latter pointed out that ‘the disparities between the North and South were at the root of the problems of crime and subversion in Italy as a whole’³⁴², adding that although some immigrants from the South had well adapted themselves to the city life, ‘many others had failed to do this’ revealing ‘a natural tendency for them to turn to crime or political violence’³⁴³. The British diplomatic service counted among its members some diplomats sharing the opinion of the Prefect of Cremona. Sir Ronald Arculus, Ambassador to Italy in the period between 1979 and 1983, seemed to agree with Dr Barile when he wrote that ‘in the primitive societies of the South of Italy and of the islands, Italian people have solved conflicts through violence rather than through law for a long time’³⁴⁴. Yet, on the other hand, the contrasting viewpoint expressed by the Prefect of Pavia saw the terrorist phenomenon as a ‘Northern and not a Southern practice’, acted by ‘well-educated’ terrorists, grown-up with Catholic values and belonging to ‘a prosperous middle-class family’³⁴⁵. The British Consul-General Scott proved to be more prudent in judging the terrorist phenomenon, claiming that both of the standpoints—the Prefect of Cremona’s and Pavia’s—could be regarded reasonable. Nonetheless, he added that Dr Barile represented ‘the general Northern view’ fostered by Italian newspapers, which reported daily that ‘very many of the criminals, and especially the kidnappers (who [were] the most of the lot) [were] Southern criminals’³⁴⁶. According to Sir Alan C. Goodison, a British Minister in Italy from 1976 to 1980, a crucial distinction should be drawn considering the two points of view of the Prefects—it was true that Northern cities had a high rate of crime, exacerbated by the Southern immigrant cause, but urban crime was a different phenomenon from political violence. Sir Goodison acknowledged that

³⁴² TNA, FCO 33-4048, HM Consul General’s visit to Cremona, despatch Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 27 June 1979.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ TNA, FCO 33-4594, Terrorism in Italy, despatch (051/4) by Arculus, WRJ 051/3, 8 agosto 1980 cit. Bentivoglio, “Violenza Endemica o Eterodiretta? Il Terrorismo Italiano Degli Anni Settanta e Ottanta Visto Da Londra,” 206.

³⁴⁵ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Calls in Pavia, despatch by Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 17 July 1979.

³⁴⁶ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division of Italy, dispatch (014/3) Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 6 August 1979.

the latter '[was] an essentially Northern phenomenon which [had] its roots in the major cities of the North and [had] spread from there southwards',³⁴⁷.

Despite it was clear within the British embassy that the North-South conflict and every link made to connect it with the terrorist phenomenon was the output of deep-rooted and unfair prejudices, the tone of denigration adopted by Northerners towards Southern people still baffled the British diplomatic corps. The Consul-General Scott expressed his puzzlement to his colleagues, wondering how was it possible that Southerners could contain their resentment at such comments, 'unless this [was] indeed one of the underlying causes of much of the apparently mind-less and purpose-less political violence',³⁴⁸.

4.3 International links

Through the study of the available documents, it was possible to notice that already by 1975 the British government had suspicion that links connecting terrorist organizations all over the world existed. Those links involved not only groups operating at transnational level—such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, for example—but also terrorist organs active nationally, thus creating a network aiming at offering logistical help.

By the mid-1970s international connections between terrorist organizations were not seriously considered and it would take time, precisely the outset of the 1980s, to be properly and publicly debated. It is indicative of this scepticism the speech Lord Chalfont, a life peer, held to the House of Lords in February 1975. Worried about the growing phenomenon of subversion and left-wing extremism in the UK, Lord Chalfont pointed out several points, among which the 'very wide network of links between international terrorist organizations',³⁴⁹. Although the name of the Red Brigades or other Italian subversive groups was never put forward he made clear references to links involving the IRA and other British 'home-grown revolutionary organizations' with the PLO and the German RAF, with whom Italy's extremists were in contact. A contribution to support Lord Chalfont's thesis was given by Lord Gore-Booth, who reminded the Lords in the assembly that only two years earlier it was found that the

³⁴⁷ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division in Italy, telegram (15a) Goodison to Scott, WRJ 014/2, 26 July 1979.

³⁴⁸ TNA, FCO 33-4048, The North South division in Italy, despatch (014/3) Scott to Arculus, WRJ 014/2, 5 July 1979.

³⁴⁹ Hansard, HL, vol. 357, col.833, 26 February 1975 (Lord Chalfont).

guilty parties for the attack to the Tel Aviv airport were Puerto Ricans and that ‘it happened in Israel, it was performed by Japanese who had obtained false documents in Germany and Czechoslovak weapons in Italy’³⁵⁰.

Yet, three years later during a debate about terrorist organizations and the ratification of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism held in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Roy Mason, firmly stated that ‘although contacts [might] be made, they [were] not of any significance’³⁵¹. However, only a week later, on 22 May 1978, Lord Chalfont warned again the House of Lords against the ‘widespread and growing network of international terrorism, that [was] highly organized and [was] recruited in many nations of the world’³⁵². Moreover, referring to the military training terrorists used to receive abroad, he mentioned the recent event occurred in Italy, putting forward the hypothesis that terrorists that attacked and murdered Aldo Moro could have been trained in East European and other Communist countries. The theory of a structured terrorist network took some years to become established within the British Houses of Commons and Lords. During a debate in the House of Lords, the life peer Lord Weidenfeld asserted that ‘there [was] scarcely a subversive political group of importance operating in the world that at one time or other did not pass through one of the PLO’s farflung training camps’ adding that there were ‘proven links with the IRA, the Baader Meinhof, the Red Army Brigade in Italy, their namesakes in Japan, the Polisarios of the Sahara, terrorists of El Salvador and the Monteneros of Argentina’, identifying their common feature in the ‘total rejection of Israel’s right to live’³⁵³. The terrorist phenomenon was thus conceived as a ‘rapid growth industry’, involving terrorist organizations ‘cooperat[ing] on money, weapons, training, tactics, refuges and intelligence’³⁵⁴. As far as Italy was concerned, the President of the Italian Republic Sandro Pertini revealed to the neo-elected British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that according to him, Italian terrorism ‘[was] being controlled from headquarters outside Italy’, adding that the country was chosen as a

³⁵⁰ Hansard, HL, vol. 357, col. 869, 26 February 1975 (Lord Goore-Booth).

³⁵¹ Hansard, HC, vol. 949, col. 1378, 11 May 1978 (Mr. Mason).

³⁵² Hansard, HL, vol. 392, col. 743, 22 May 1978 (Lord Chalfont).

³⁵³ Hansard, HL, vol. 415, col. 134, 26 November 1980 (Lord Weidenfeld).

³⁵⁴ Hansard, HC, vol. 38, col. 625, 7 March 1983 (Mr. Griffiths).

target because of its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, facing Africa and the Middle-East³⁵⁵. However Italy had no proof to support such a statement.

In the aftermath of Aldo Moro's murder, it was observed by Lord Chalfont that the terrorist 'rapid growth industry' had always had as main targets 'the countries of the Western democratic world'³⁵⁶. Though, it took some time to make a further step and to identify the assumed guilty party of a such widespread phenomenon. It was again Lord Chalfont, who denounced in a committed speech at the House of Lords the alleged culprit of the 'international league of terror' stating³⁵⁷:

At the centre of this network—and I have said this before in your Lordships' House and say it again now—is the Soviet Union, which, usually through the medium of its clients in the Middle East, provides the training and the finance. It is now fully documented that until the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon, the PLO were being trained in more than 50 camps in the Communist bloc, 40 of them in the Soviet Union itself. The links between the PLO and the Baader Meinhof group in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, the Basque separatists in Spain and the other terrorist organisations of the world are now so fully documented that no one any longer even bothers to discuss them or deny them.

Thus, the so called *red network theory*³⁵⁸, holding that behind the 'low intensity warfare against the West'³⁵⁹ stood the Soviet Union, started to be regarded reliable since the beginning of the new decade.

4.4 Terrorism and the Italian political-social background in the aftermath of Aldo Moro's Murder

The abduction and following murder of the President of the Christian Democracy represented the peak of the terrorist campaign conducted by the Red Brigades. It shocked the Italian population, the Italian parties and the entire Western world not only for the guerrilla scenes occurred in a central area of the capital city of a Western democratic state, but also for the subject involved. Aldo Moro had taken up different offices for an uninterrupted period, starting as a Minister of Justice in the second half of the 1950s, running diverse ministries over a period of twenty years, serving as Prime

³⁵⁵ TNA, PREM 19/88, Italy: Record of conversation (MT-President Pertini of Italy, Arculus, 5 October 1979).

³⁵⁶ Hansard, HL, vol. 392, col. 743, 22 May 1978 (Lord Chalfont).

³⁵⁷ Hansard, HL, vol. 457, col. 60, 7 November 1984 (Lord Chalfont).

³⁵⁸ Ceci, *Il terrorismo italiano*, 264.

³⁵⁹ Hansard, HL, vol. 468, c. 78, 7 November 1985 (Lord Chalfont).

Minister for more than six years and at the time³⁶⁰, not only the President of the governing party but also the favourite to be appointed President of the Italian Republic. Since from the outset of the incident, London expressed its solidarity towards the Italian government and Moro's family. The conservative party's leader, Margaret Thatcher—who just nine months earlier had invited the Christian Democratic President in order to foster closer relations between their two parties³⁶¹—sent a telegram to the Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, conveying her and other Conservative members' shock 'to hear today's terrible events in which Signor Moro was abducted and his brave bodyguards were murdered'³⁶². Distress over the Moro's affair was showed at European level as well. The British Prime Minister James Callaghan reported during a session at the House of Commons that, in light of the Moro's abduction, 'there was agreement on the need for close co-operation among the Nine in countering terrorism and to reach conclusions on the proposals put forward by President Giscard with the aim of improving judicial co-operation among the member countries'³⁶³. Unfortunately, only a single agreement was signed a year later by the Ministers of Justice of the nine Member States regarding the Application of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, dictating that extradition of political criminals was envisaged in particular cases³⁶⁴.

Beyond the international implications, which are not part of this thesis work, the Moro's abduction and murder and the terrorist phenomenon overall turned out to be a key factor, through which London carried out the analysis of the Italian political and social context near the end of the decade.

Moro's killing provoked the immediate reaction of the British Parliament, which through the words of the Conservative Party's leader Margaret Thatcher not only expressed its sympathy but also showed its 'understanding of the very difficult decisions that faced his [Moro's] colleagues during what [had] also to have been a great ordeal for them'³⁶⁵. The British Prime Minister Callaghan also shared Thatcher's words, stating: 'I hope that any British Government would face such a situation with the same

³⁶⁰ "Aldo Moro," accessed January 5, 2020, https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/ministero/il_mae/ministri_esteri/aldo_moro.html.

³⁶¹ Thatcher MSS Archive, THCR 5/1/2/140, MT Office record of conversation, 25 June 1977.

³⁶² Thatcher MSS Archive, THCR 2/6/1/109, MT telegram to Italian PM Andreotti, 16 March 1978.

³⁶³ Hansard, HC, vol. 947, c. 983, 10 April 1978 (The Prime Minister Mr. Callaghan).

³⁶⁴ Maurice Flory and Rosalyn Higgins, *Terrorism and International Law* (Routledge, 2002), 104.

³⁶⁵ Hansard, HC, vol. 949, c. 1400, 11 May 1978 (Mrs. Thatcher).

courage as the Italian Government have done³⁶⁶. Those praises referred to the hard-line Rome took over terrorists' ransom note, and thus its decision not to negotiate with the Red Brigades—who had demanded the release of Communist prisoners³⁶⁷. Thus, the British Parliament looked up to the firm stance the Italian government had towards terrorists' demands, but at the same time it admired the strength it showed in making the civil choice to refuse to reintroduce the capital punishment as a special measure³⁶⁸—a proposal advanced by the President of the Italian Republican Party, Ugo La Malfa³⁶⁹, and demanded out loud by Giorgio Almirante, the Secretary of the Italian Social Movement³⁷⁰. Italy would be looked up to as an example of democratic resistance, when emergencies provisions would be discussed at the British House of Commons in relation to the Provisional IRA's increasing activity and the demand for capital punishment by some Irish Unionists³⁷¹.

Aside from such a radical provision as the capital punishment, the British Embassy in Rome noted that the Italian political parties 'were reconciled to the adoption of at least some of the measures necessary to combat terrorism'³⁷². In his detailed analysis of the two consecutive governments headed by Andreotti—the first formed on March 1978, whereas the second a year later—the British diplomat Alan Campbell reported that terrorism initially worked as a glue for the Parliamentary majority, which 'apart some wavering by the Socialists, stood firmly behind the government in the face of terrorist blackmail during the Moro affair'³⁷³.

This kind of approving comments on the Italian political situation at the end of the decade should not be misleading. Indeed, by the accounts of the British ambassador, it proved to be clear to Campbell that terrorism was such a weak reason to keep a

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Brigade Rosse, "Comunicato n. 7 – Archivio900.It," accessed January 8, 2020, <http://www.archivio900.it/it/documenti/doc.aspx?id=54>.

³⁶⁸ Hansard, HC, vol. 45, c. 901, 13 July 1983 (Mr. Edward Heath).

³⁶⁹ Marica Tolomelli, "Di Fronte Alle BR e Alla RAF: Percezioni Sociali a Confronto," in *L'Italia Repubblicana Nella Crisi Degli Anni Settanta: Partiti e Organizzazioni Di Massa* (Rubbettino Editore, 2003), 445.

³⁷⁰ Camera dei Deputati, "Atti Parlamentari, VII Legislatura, Seduta Di Giovedì 16 Marzo 1978 (257)," n.d., 14528, accessed January 8, 2020, http://legislature.camera.it/_dati/leg07/lavori/stenografici/sed0257/sed0257.pdf.

³⁷¹ Hansard, HC, vol. 26, col. 961, 30 June 1982 (Mrs. Shirley Williams).

³⁷² TNA, FCO 33-4046, Italy Annual Review for 1978, despatch by Campbell, WRJ 014/1, 15 January 1979.

³⁷³ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Fourth and fifth Andreotti Governments, despatch (014/5) Campbell, WRJ 014/2, 30 April 1979.

parliamentary majority cohesive. Indeed, although political and economic conditions of the Andreotti's fourth government were judged to be 'not bad by Italian standards', it was noticed that 'the most fundamental questions of economic reform, e.g. the curtailment of public expenditure and wage inflation, remain unsolved'³⁷⁴. Economic causes would be indeed the main pretext for the fourth Andreotti's government crisis and eventual fall. As it was showed in the first chapter, Italy's membership of the European Monetary System meant the return of the Communists in opposition and again, it would be the Italian Communist Party to cause the downfall of the fifth Andreotti's government. According to the British embassy's interpretation, such a Communist stance was due to the lack of consensus suffered by the Italian Communist Party because of its taking part to a Christian Democracy-led government without holding governmental position³⁷⁵, as it was originally envisaged by the 'historic compromise'. However, as pointed out by Campbell in his Annual Review of 1978, one of the major consequence of Moro's death was the failure of such an agreement to be honoured. The British ambassador's analysis proved to be accurate and correct³⁷⁶:

The Communists (PCI) for their part derived little benefit and some disadvantage from both of these events. Moro had been the architect of the elaborate structure of the present political framework which enabled them last March to take a small step forward towards their goal of participation in Government. Even if Moro in fact gave away very little and may be seen in a sense to have outwitted them, he was still the Communists' preferred interlocutor and they must regard his disappearance as a set-back to their ambitions.

From the description above, a further point comes to light, that is the perception by the British officials that the 'historic compromise' was actually a strategy conceived by the President of the Christian Democracy in order to solve the Italian crisis due to economic problems such as the inflation, and calm down the resulting turmoil caused by trade unions' protests and student agitations³⁷⁷. As reported by several British accounts, its failure and the consequent return to opposition benches by the Communists, was seen through two opposite viewpoint by some Italian local officials: as a threat to law and

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ TNA, FCO 33-4046, Italy Annual Review for 1978, despatch by Campbell, WRJ 014/1, 15 January 1979.

³⁷⁷ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Familiarisation visit to Naples, Basilicata and Milan, despatch by Colvin, WRJ 014/2, 8 May 1979.

order on one hand, or as a sign of health for a nation, thanks to the alternation of power in governmental position³⁷⁸.

However, once Aldo Moro disappeared from the political scene, the Italian Communists could not find any available counterpart with whom discuss, since significant changes occurred within the Christian Democratic Party. Benigno Zaccagnini, the political secretary of the Christian Democracy as well as the moral heir of Aldo Moro, was broadly judged to be like an 'orphan'. Since Moro's death, he remained the only representative of a leftist political line, doomed to failure in the party congress in 1980, when Flaminio Piccoli, a moderate exponent, was appointed secretary of the Christian Democracy.

With regards to Christian democratic members, British documents offered positive accounts of two Prime Ministers, i.e. Giulio Andreotti and Francesco Cossiga. As far as the latter is concerned, the diplomat Alan Goodison provided the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with a brief account of his persona on the occasion of his appointment as Prime Minister on August 1979, in the aftermath of the fifth Andreotti's government. In Goodison's report, the period in which Cossiga held the office as Interior Minister, co-operation between London and Rome on security matter received a considerable boost. Although the ending of the Moro's case represented a serious blot on his ministerial actions, his resignation in the aftermath of Moro's death made him earn the reputation of 'a minister who was prepared to take responsibility for the shortcomings of his subordinates'³⁷⁹. Furthermore, Goodison pointed out that during his office as Minister of the Interior, Cossiga 'showed himself well disposed towards Britain, and Anglo/Italian co-operation in the security field was close'; this stance won him the trust of British official, who wrote: 'Despite his comparative lack of international and European experience, he could prove to be a good choice of Prime Minister both from Italy's and the UK's point of view'³⁸⁰.

Even more enthusiastic were the reports regarding Giulio Andreotti, 'the cleverest and coolest political leader in Italy today. A man of government rather than of the Christian Democrat Party machine'³⁸¹ who had served as a minister of several key ministries

³⁷⁸ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Visit to Brescia, dispatch by Scott, WRJ 014/2, 13 June 1979.

³⁷⁹ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Italian political situation, telegram (309) by Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 7 August 1979.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ TNA, PREM 19-87, Visit by the Prime Minister of Italy, Brief (8) by FCO, 13 June 1978.

since the middle-1950s and was leading the government during the Moro's affair. Already at the end of 1978, Alan Campbell pointed out³⁸²:

The politician who seems subsequently to have emerged most strongly in the course of the year, partly owing to Moro's disappearance and partly because his Government has been relatively effective, is Andreotti.

London was so much struck by the way Andreotti faced the abduction and killing of the President of the Christian Democracy that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in giving information serving for a meeting between Andreotti and Thatcher, wrote: 'Signor Andreotti won justifiable praise for his calm and courageous handling of the Moro kidnapping and murder'³⁸³. However, British esteem for Andreotti did not only regard the way he handled the emergency, but also his lead of 'governments which have done unexpectedly well', for a total period of a whole legislation—a record, it is pointed out by Campbell, only held by Alcide De Gasperi in the post-war Italy³⁸⁴. Among political measures adopted by the fourth Andreotti's government, it was mentioned the divisive bill to legalise the abortion, whereas economic provisions were highly praised, although many of them were judged to be 'doubtfully workable' or too much expensive, such as the establishment of a national health service or the legislation on the financial restructuring of industry³⁸⁵. The Pandolfi Plan, a three-year economic plan envisaging the containment of public spending and moderation in the growth of wage costs, was welcomed by the British embassy in Rome as the last achievement of the national unity government led by Andreotti. No further structural reforms, such as the crucial bill on reform of pensions, could be pushed through, since the Communists would cause the collapse of the grand coalition, through their withdrawal from the government majority, at the beginning of 1979. It was the end of the remarkable national unity government led by Andreotti, characterized by 'his skilful management of parliamentary alliances, involving the support of the Italian Communist Party, without making serious concession to the latter'³⁸⁶.

³⁸² TNA, FCO 33-4046, Italy Annual Review for 1978, despatch by Campbell, WRJ 014/1, 15 January 1979.

³⁸³ TNA, PREM 19-87, Visit by the Prime Minister of Italy, Brief (8) by FCO, 13 June 1978.

³⁸⁴ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Fourth and fifth Andreotti Governments, dispatch (014/5) Campbell, WRJ 014/2, 30 April 1979.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ TNA, PREM 19-87, Visit by the Prime Minister of Italy, Brief (8) by FCO, 13 June 1978.

The last prominent personality standing out in British diplomatic documents is Sandro Pertini, who was elected President of the Italian Republic in the aftermath of what was labelled by Campbell ‘a paltry affair’ compared to the Moro’s case³⁸⁷, i.e. the premature resignation of the Christian Democrat Giovanni Leone—who was forced to stand down as head of state owing to allegations against him about Lockheed scandal. The election of President Pertini was immediately recognised by London as a sign of the political evolution of the Italian Socialist Party under Bettino Craxi’s leadership, which had showed an impressive increase in its numbers on the occasion of the administrative elections in May 1978. Beyond Pertini’s membership, British diplomats regarded the new-elected President of the Italian Republic ‘an evidently admirable man’³⁸⁸, and probably they shared the same opinion of their American colleague Richard Gardner, when he described Pertini’s career to be like that of a character of Alexander Dumas’s novels³⁸⁹. Pertini’s past life—featuring frequent arrests and escapes from the Fascists and Nazis as well as a strong fight against the Fascism—was undoubtedly regarded remarkable, but what foreign observers considered fundamental was his ultimate adherence to the Atlantic Pact, in spite of his initial pacifism and neutralism, together with a change of attitude towards the Communists, which had been seen as possible ally for years, but then were replaced with the support of a centre-left coalition³⁹⁰.

Since Pertini’s election, British comments on his office were passionate, always praising his performance as ‘one of the bright feature of the political scene’³⁹¹, not only for succeeding in dealing with the recurring political crises—already six months after his assignment, the Communists toppled the Government— but also for representing a respected figure of authority, calling for a change in the political classes and an hard-line stance against terrorism³⁹².

³⁸⁷ TNA, FCO 33-4046, Italy Annual Review for 1978, despatch by Campbell, WRJ 014/1, 15 January 1979.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Richard N. Gardner, *Mission: Italy* (Milano: Mondadori, 2004), 251.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ TNA, FCO 33-4435, Annual Review for 1979, despatch (014/12) by Arculus, WRJ 014/1, 21 January 1980.

³⁹² TNA, FCO 33-4897, Annual Review for 1980, report (75/81) by Arculus, WRJ 014/1, 7 January 1981.

4.4.1 Conclusive observations: the inefficiency of the Italian military forces and justice

Terrorism proved to be a profitable reason for bolstering cooperation between Italy and Great Britain. The latter had already great experience in the field, because of the long-time activity of the Irish Republican Army, the irredentist paramilitary group based in Ireland.

Great Britain was among the NATO allies, which were asked for military assistance during the Moro's kidnapping, since it was believed that the terrorists responsible for the abduction of the Christian Democracy's President had received help from the outside³⁹³. For this reason, high-professional specialists coming from West Germany and Britain were deployed during the research activities of Mr Moro firstly, and his killers later. As far as West Germany was concerned, its assistance consisted in thirty-two members of the German police belonging to the squad, which was searching for the killers of Hans Martin Schleyer, the President of the German employer's association killed by the RAF in October 1977, five months earlier than the Italian events³⁹⁴. Whilst, the significant contribution of London was the visit of two men of the British SAS—a special forces corps specialized in counter-terrorism and hostage rescue—in charge of training their Italian counterparts to deal with 'terrorist hostage-taking incidents'³⁹⁵.

The involvement of other nations in the Italian security matter was fundamental, since, as it emerged from the British documents and press articles, Italian military forces proved to be uncoordinated and thus inefficient³⁹⁶. According to the British newspaper 'The Observer', this was due to 'the overlapping of functions and rivalries between the nationally organised Carabinieri, the local traffic police run by the Interior Ministry and the various Secret Service agencies'³⁹⁷. In the column of 'The Times', Lord Chalfont uttered harsh words when he described the Italian police, which was judged 'demoralized and ineffective', susceptible to likely infiltration by the terrorists³⁹⁸. According to Lord Chalfont, improvement of the poor conditions in which the Italian military force worked could not be carried out because of the opposition of the Leftist

³⁹³ Upi, "Uproar in Court as Terrorist Hearing Resumes in Turin," *The Guardian* (London, March 21, 1978), 6.

³⁹⁴ Ian Mather, "Turin Fears New Terror, 26 March 1978," *The Observer*, n.d., 5.

³⁹⁵ TNA, PREM 19-87, Visit by the Prime Minister of Italy, Brief (7) by FCO, 13 June 1978.

³⁹⁶ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Italian elections- background and prospects, WRJ 014/2, 2 April 1979.

³⁹⁷ Ian Mather, "Red Brigades Strike at the Heart of Italy," *The Observer*, March 19, 1978, 17.

³⁹⁸ Lord Chalfont, "Moro the Dreadful Lesson," *The Times*, May 15, 1978, 14.

parties³⁹⁹, whose demand that the police forces had to be unionised into the Communist linked trade union CGIL (the Italian General Confederation of Labour) caused frictions between the two main governmental parties.

On this purpose, both the British press and diplomats observed that the legacy of Fascism played the role of ‘bogymen’ in the country, hampering any proposal of reform regarded by the Left as ‘a potentially dangerous step back down the road to terrorism’⁴⁰⁰ consequently making the authorities afraid of being accused of authoritarianism⁴⁰¹.

Once again, Italy was taken as an example—not to follow, though—of the need for an improvement in conditions of the police forces, if considerable achievements in contrasting terrorism wanted to be reached. From the benches of the British House of Lords, in a significant speech about the adoption of the Internationally Protected Persons Bill, the Baroness Diana Elles underlined the vicious cycle the Italian police was going through because of the attacks carried out by the press, debating⁴⁰²:

I should like, if I may, to spend just one minute on what has been happening in Italy, as the noble Lord so rightly reminded us. There was a very important article in an Italian newspaper about a year ago, referring to the unfair and deprecatory attacks on the police force in the Press, in the media, by demonstrations, by word of mouth and by leaflets over five years. There was a crescendo of these attacks until about two years ago. There was a graph plotted of the number of attacks on the police on television and in broadcasts. I mention this advisedly, because we have recently suffered the same thing—a very unfair attack on the police made on television, which is perhaps just a warning shot across our bows. This series of attacks against the police went in a crescendo until about two or three years ago, when they suddenly descended. It was perfectly clear why they had descended—because the police in Italy had become demoralised, they had become inefficient and they had been subverted. To my mind, this was a very serious lesson to Western democratic States that if we sign these Conventions and if we undertake to protect not only our own citizens but internationally protected persons, we must see that our police forces are adequate for the task.

An unfair attack on police was just the criticism directed to Lord Chalfont’s editorial by Peter Partner. The British historian wrote a complaining letter to ‘The Times’, commenting that the level of the article was close to the ‘took-Mussolini-to-make-the-Italian-trains-run-on-time sort’. He went on affirming:

Italian police organization certainly needs reform—did the Germans have better luck with major political kidnappings?—but I think that many who know Italy well would agree that the Italian *Carabinieri* are a serious body of men actuated by a high sense of duty. The kind of knocking treatment Lord Chalfont administers to them, combined with his suggestion that Italy is a “soft

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ian Mather, “Red Brigades Strike at the Heart of Italy,” 17.

⁴⁰¹ TNA, FCO 33-4048, HM Consul’s visit to Cremona, despatch by Scott to Goodison, WRJ 014/2, 27 June 1979.

⁴⁰² Hansard, HL, vol. 392, cc. 402-403, 17 May 1978 (Baroness Elles).

touch” for terrorists, amounts to prejudiced disparagement of a great civilized country—a country which also happens to be out NATO ally⁴⁰³.

These kind of remarks, however, did not represent the general opinion about Italy and its institutions—in fact, the bulk of the readers of ‘The Time’ showed appreciation for Lord Chalfont’s editorial, albeit all of them distanced themselves from the call for ruthlessness from the Government⁴⁰⁴.

Unfavourable comments did not spare the Italian justice, as well. In a British report describing the elections background in Italy in 1979, an article of the prominent Italian newspaper ‘Corriere della Sera’ was quoted, regarding the numerous problems afflicting the country. Conditions concerning the administration of justice were among the issues listed by the newspaper and they were considered ‘dramatic’, since ‘many crimes, among which [were] acts of corruption and violence remain[ed] unpunished. Thousands of criminals beginning with innumerable terrorists [...] ha[d] been released from prison because of State’s inability to bring them to trial’⁴⁰⁵.

On the other hand, by reading the British newspapers, people from Great Britain were informed that trials against the Red Brigades were constantly delayed because of the inability of the Italian justice to provide defence lawyers and people of the jury service with security against the Red Brigades’ threats and retaliation. After the murder of the chairman of the Turin Bar Association—Fulvio Croce, who accepted the office of Court-appointed counsel—the journalist of The Observer, David Willey, wondered ‘how this tiny group of political fanatics was managing to frustrate the course of justice’⁴⁰⁶. ‘The Times’ correspondent Peter Nichols, commenting the opening of the trial against the Red Brigades in the eve of Moro’s kidnapping, wrote:

Tomorrow is the third attempt and much more of a trial is at stake. The court of assizes has to show that Italian justice can bring allegedly dangerous terrorists to trial despite the atmosphere of fear they have created by the kidnappings, murders and woundings with which they are charged or for which they claim responsibility⁴⁰⁷.

⁴⁰³ Peter Partner, “Terrorism in Italy,” *The Times*, May 18, 1978, 19.

⁴⁰⁴ Letters to the Editor, “Resisting Terrorism After the Murder of Aldo Moro,” *The Times*, May 17, 1978, 17.

⁴⁰⁵ TNA, FCO 33-4048, Italian elections- background and prospects, WRJ 014/2, 2 April 1979.

⁴⁰⁶ David Willey, “Law and Order on Trial in Milan,” *The Observer*, June 19, 1977, 6.

⁴⁰⁷ Peter Nichols, “Italian Public Opinion Focused on Opening of Red Brigades Trial,” *The Times*, March 9, 1978, 10.

4.5 Political violence through the decade

The narration of the Italian terrorist phenomenon through the British eyes significantly changed throughout the decade, switching between protagonists, alternating between worrying and restrained tone, though never losing the distinguishing British humour, not even in the diplomatic documents.

As far as the protagonists are concerned, it is possible to notice that in the British newspaper articles appeared in the first half of the 1970s, right-wing extremist groups prevailed over the left-wing extremists, i.e. news about law and order in Italy reported an increase in violence by neo-fascist organizations. Already in 1971, the Londoner 'The Guardian' informed its readers that a wave of violence having neo-fascist hallmarks was sweeping over Italy. However, the newspaper clarified in many articles the Italian Government's will to consider and treat the right-wing and left-wing violence in the same way⁴⁰⁸.

In the reports of the British press, the Italian Social Movement of Giorgio Almirante was regarded responsible for the outbreak of political violence, which was supposed to create serious disorder, in order that his party could base its successful election campaign for 1972 national election on the restoration of law and order in Italy⁴⁰⁹. Actually, according to the comments appeared on 'The Guardian' about the trial for alleged Fascism involving Almirante's party, the climate of tension characterizing Italy in the first half of the 1970s was due to the right-wing extremists linked to the Italian Social Movement⁴¹⁰. A similar analysis was given by 'The Times', which argued that the social turmoil caused by neo-fascists was to be ascribed to the fact that Fascism was forbidden under the Constitution. The British newspaper went on specifying that: 'Fascism has only limited appeal except when public confidence in the social and political order is undermined. This is why it uses violence to undermine confidence. This is also why it is felt to be a danger in Italy today'⁴¹¹.

However, the spreading violence across the country was originally seen by London more as an output of political tension between the left-wing groups and the right-wing movements than an actual attempt at overthrowing the Italian political system. Indeed,

⁴⁰⁸ George Armstrong, "Neo-Fascists Under Attack," *The Guardian*, February 26, 1971, 4.

⁴⁰⁹ Reuter, "Immunity Ends for Neo-Fascist," *The Guardian*, May 25, 1973, 4.

⁴¹⁰ John Cornwell, "In the Killing of a Policeman During a Neofascist Demonstration," *The Guardian*, June 20, 1973, 14.

⁴¹¹ "Political Violence in Italy," *The Times*, May 19, 1973, 15.

although the alarming news coming from Italy, a coup d'état was considered 'improbable' by British newspaper correspondents, since 'there [were] just not enough people anxious to put their fingers on the trigger'⁴¹².

However, right-wing thuggish activities kept on being reported as 'the main concern of Italy's political leaders'⁴¹³ until 1976. The reports on this matter given by 'The Guardian' used to highlight the violence perpetrated by the neo-fascists by making leftist groups appear victims of their bomb attacks and clashes⁴¹⁴. The accounts provided by 'The Times', on the contrary, appeared more neutral and described the events occurring as part of a urban guerrilla, for which both the movements were responsible⁴¹⁵⁴¹⁶.

During the general elections held in 1976, political violence—which, actually, never faded from the news about Italy given by the British correspondents—was feared to erupt again. 1976 could be probably recognized as the turning point in the narration of political tension. From this year, articles on turmoil affecting the Italian country appearing in the UK's newspapers gradually underwent a change in protagonists. The plausible reason explaining this shift could be linked to the arrest of Renato Curcio, Red Brigades' founder⁴¹⁷ and the consequences it brought in the establishment of a new leadership—assumed, from then on, by Mario Moretti.

It is significant that, in January 1977, an article by 'The Times' informed that, in the previous year, 'Political Crimes doubled in Italy'⁴¹⁸ compared to 1975—in 1976 offences related to political tension were estimated at 1.198 cases and for 95 of them the Red Brigades were blamed. The earliest mention of the group by British newspapers dates back to Giangiacomo Feltrinelli's death in 1972, when the police uncovered links connecting Feltrinelli's organization, the Groups of Partisan Action, and 'another terrorist left-wing organization called Red Brigade'⁴¹⁹. Already at that time, Red Brigades' aim to 'carry out urban guerrilla warfare in Milan, capture leading public

⁴¹² Campbell Page, "Time for an End to the Medication?," *The Guardian*, June 24, 1974, 5.

⁴¹³ George Armstrong, "Violence Puts Italy at Risk," *The Guardian*, March 6, 1975, 2.

⁴¹⁴ Reuter, "Mounting Violence in Italy," *The Guardian*, April 21, 1975, 5.

⁴¹⁵ Peter Nichols, "New Outbreak of Violence in Italy Provokes Politician to Action," *The Times*, April 21, 1975, 5.

⁴¹⁶ Peter Nichols, "Violence in Italy Over Milan Killing by Fascist," *The Times*, April 19, 1975, 4.

⁴¹⁷ "Guerrilla Chief Caught in Milan Gun Battle," *The Times*, January 19, 1976, 5.

⁴¹⁸ Peter Nichols, "Political Crimes Doubled in Italy," *The Times*, January 26, 1977, 5.

⁴¹⁹ "Left-Wingers Charged for Saying Feltrinelli Death Was Part of Plot," *The Times*, March 23, 1972, 4.

figures and put them on trial'⁴²⁰ was a well-known fact. Nonetheless, when it happened the most crucial event in the history of modern Italy, both the Italian public opinion and British observers felt shocked at the news.

Moro's abduction and murder could be considered the climax of the terrorist phenomenon and a turning point in the Italian political scene, as already shown in the previous paragraph, but also the event that drove the society not to back the Red Brigades up anymore. The British press, however, gave reports about the general feeling widespread among the Italian population already before the Christian Democrat President's kidnapping – at this point, the people of Italy felt exhausted from a phenomenon which '[...] has gone on too long while seemingly lacking either a specific aim or an idea'⁴²¹. Nonetheless, because of the traditional indifference of the Italians towards—actually, a real approval for—the Red Brigades and the other leftist groups, there were observers like Lord Chalfont, who feared that the public opinion would react apathetically even to the most violent act. The British politician, commenting the death of Aldo Moro, wrote in the column of 'The Times': 'The real danger is not that Italy and the rest of the world will be devastated by the death of Moro, but rather that, after a momentary sense of outrage, the sluggish waters of apathy will close quietly over his body',⁴²².

As regards Moro's kidnap, the British press dealt thoroughly with the theme, linking the dramatic event with the trial taking place in Turin and involving the Red Brigades' founders. 'The Times' journalist Caroline Moorehead highlighted that the kidnap of Moro might be 'a final bid to free the accused',⁴²³.

All the three newspapers consulted during this work showed to have understood the gravity of the episode, comparing it with the attempted assassination in Rome of the late Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti⁴²⁴, or simply acknowledging that 'the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, Italy's leading politician, [was] an event of enormous political

⁴²⁰ David Willey, "Italy Heads for Greater Chaos," *The Observer*, May 7, 1972, 5.

⁴²¹ Peter Nichols, "Italy at the Crossroads: Can Democracy Still Beat the Extremists?," *The Times*, January 16, 1978, 12.

⁴²² Lord Chalfont, "Moro the Dreadful Lesson," 14.

⁴²³ Caroline Moorehead, "Italy's New Breed of Bodysnatchers," *The Times*, March 17, 1978, 18.

⁴²⁴ George Armstrong, "The King Maker Who Was to Be King," *The Guardian*, March 17, 1978, 15.

significance, not just another in a long catalogue of spectacular bloody crimes. It was a deliberately calculated blow struck at the State itself⁴²⁵.

Despite the recognized seriousness of the happening, British journalists noticed that the Italian press was underestimating the Red Brigades, branding its rhetoric as ‘delirious’ and ‘raving’, clashing with the Government’s concern⁴²⁶. The latter had indeed created a special task force made up of political scientists, sociologists and psychologists for the purpose of analysing Red Brigades’ propaganda and Moro’s pleas for release⁴²⁷. The latter, on the other hand, represented an important issue of the incidents. Christian Democratic President’s demands for negotiations with the Red Brigades’ members were not taken seriously, since they were thought to be extorted from Moro through violence or by the means of drugs⁴²⁸. Hence, the Government’s decision to maintain the so called ‘hard-line’ and not to give in to the group’s blackmail.

Among the voices that stood up against the former Prime Minister’s abduction, there was also the voice of the Italian Mafia, which—as reported by ‘The Guardian’—made death threats against the kidnappers. Actually, those threats were far away to be an official stance against the Red Brigades, rather an attempt at safeguarding Mafia’s interests, since the full deployment of troops made it possible to uncover some of its illicit businesses⁴²⁹.

The voice of the Italian Communist Party against the organized group, however, was the most unexpected, probably also because of its firmness on the decision not to give in to Red Brigades’ blackmail. As an example, it was put forward by the Communists the proposal of giving special powers to the Italian Interior Minister, Mr. Cossiga, to coordinate all the three police forces⁴³⁰. According to the British analysts, the Communist behaviour was a way to publicly distance themselves from a group, which claimed having their roots in the Marxism-Leninism and thus making the public opinion believe that the Red Brigades and Communism were closely related.

Actually, as it was noticed by ‘The Guardian’, the Red Brigades strongly despised the Italian Communist Party—guilty of having ‘deny[ed] Marxism-Leninism and betray[ed]

⁴²⁵ Ian Mather, “Red Brigades Strike at the Heart of Italy,” 17.

⁴²⁶ Dennis Redmont, “Red Brigades Plan China-Style System,” *The Guardian*, April 11, 1978, 6.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ George Armstrong, “Andreotti Refuses to Consider Blackmail,” *The Guardian*, April 5, 1978, 6.

⁴²⁹ Upi, “Mafia Death Threat to Moro Kidnap Brigade,” *The Guardian*, March 29, 1978, 7.

⁴³⁰ George Armstrong, “Italian Troops and Police Manning a Roadblock,” *The Guardian*, March 25, 1978, 5.

the goals of the workers'— along with the Spanish and French Communists⁴³¹. Nonetheless, such a despise was due to a bitter disappointment felt by former committed Communists. An article appeared in 'The Guardian' noticed that many of the group's leaders, such as Renato Curcio, had belonged to the Communist Party before Berlinguer's 'historic compromise'. It kept on pinpointing that

many Red Brigades leaders were products of the unrest of the late 1960s, when radical students clashed with security forces on campus throughout Italy. [...] Other members were the product of 'study groups' created in many of the foreign and Italian multi-national companies based in Northern Italy, like IBM, Siemens and Olivetti⁴³².

In a further analysis on the terrorist phenomenon, the journalist of 'The Times' Peter Nichols, transcending the specific features of the Red Brigades, outlined three essential prerequisites existing in the country for explaining such a phenomenon⁴³³. First of all, a wide-spread theory according to which all the three nations on the losing side of the World War II experienced a fast change in their political system together with a remarkable industrial expansion and social transformation. Secondly, to these significant changes, improvements in institutions did not follow leaving the state apparatus muddled. The last feature pinpointed by the journalist was the Christian democratic monopoly of the power, which prevented the nation from having a natural turnover of parties in office in governmental position, i.e. from having an essential feature of a healthy democracy.

In their mind, the Red Brigades wanted to hit this kind of democracy, replacing it with a dictatorship of the proletariat. 'The attack at the heart of the State', the decisive step towards this achievement, was the murder of the alleged responsible for thirty years of a Government slave to the imperialist USA.

As showed in the previous paragraph, the assassination of Aldo Moro shocked the entire Western world. Leaving out some speculations fuelled by Lord Chalfont— who commented that Moro's murder was felt shocking only within 'the political establishment', leaving the rest of Italy indifferent⁴³⁴—what emerged from both British article and diplomatic reports was the great resilience demonstrated by the Italian nation.

⁴³¹ Dennis Redmont, "Red Brigades Plan China-Style System," 6.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Peter Nichols, "Terror's Roots Firmly in Italian Soil," *The Times*, March 22, 1978, 7.

⁴³⁴ Lord Chalfont, "Moro the Dreadful Lesson," 14.

An article appeared in 'The Guardian' praised the courage of the State, although weak and further weakened by the fifty-five days, of not surrendering to the threat of terrorism and defending the democratic values even in such a dramatic experience⁴³⁵. The Red Brigades' move, on the other hand, was regarded a 'political decision', which actually turned to be a 'mistake in favour of the Italian state'⁴³⁶. In his analysis of the events, the Israeli diplomat and journalist Dan V. Segre highlighted that Moro's abduction and murder was originally meant to divide 'the Christian-Communist parliamentary alliance', yet they failed, producing the opposite effect. Secondly, he noticed that the Red Brigades did not profit from the former Prime Minister's death, on the contrary it only offered the Christian Democrats a martyr to exploit in the future elections. The likely reason for killing Aldo Moro would have been the fact that he got in touch with members so high up in the group hierarchy that letting him free would have represented a danger for the Red Brigades itself. Hence, the journalist drew the conclusions they had to be 'a very small organization probably not more than 300 activists, with a large, mostly passive body of supporters, but without sufficient political-military articulation to create a critical mass capable of igniting a true revolutionary movement'⁴³⁷.

The British correspondent George Armstrong arrived to the same conclusion. Starting from a statement of the Red Brigades—according to which they 'did want to create bands of samurai, isolated from politics and political supports'—the journalist came to the conclusion that their indifference to involving population in their battle made them 'professional terrorists' rather than 'political revolutionaries bidding to change the life of a nation'⁴³⁸.

Nonetheless, the life of the Italian nation had to change and the way it would react to this bowl was the greatest concern not only to Italy. Peter Nichols made a comprehensive analysis of the Italian political scene just in the aftermath of Moro's finding⁴³⁹. The British journalist recognized 'the apparent stupidity of providing the Christian Democrats with a heroic martyr'—yet, the Red Brigades probably took in

⁴³⁵ George Armstrong, "Italy After the Moro Nightmare," *The Guardian*, May 10, 1978, 12.

⁴³⁶ Dan V. Segre, "Murder Most Stupid," *The Guardian*, May 16, 1978, 19.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ George Armstrong, "Italy After the Moro Nightmare," 12.

⁴³⁹ Peter Nichols, "Shocked Italy Awaits Renewed Assault After Moro Murder," *The Times*, May 10, 1978, 6.

consideration this chance, but acted however in order to strike the Christian Democratic-Communist alliance, regarded the main target of the organization's activity⁴⁴⁰. Nichols' analysis went further, noticing that in the mind of Italian people, Red Brigades terrorists tended to coincide with the Communists, although the utter contempt displayed by its members for the Italian Communist Party.

'The Times' correspondent considerations proved to be true. Indeed, the 'confusion over red terrorists' caused drastic cuts in Communist votes in the local elections held in the aftermath of Moro's death⁴⁴¹. According Armstrong's comments the votes previously gone to the Communist were distributed between the Italian Socialist and the Christian Democrats.

Such a trend was reinforced in the general election held in June 1979. Law and order during the election campaign proved to be an issue of great concern, actually not only for terrorist attacks but also for ordinary crimes. British diplomats alongside with correspondents in Italy noticed that a real electoral fight was taking place between the Christian Democrats and the Communists. The former were accusing the latter of being the ideological progenitor of the leftist terrorism and as a consequence, the Italian Communist Party got defensive, arguing that the Italian terrorist phenomenon was the outcome of thirty years of bad government by the Christian Democracy⁴⁴².

Reports of Italy in 1979 seemed rather alarming both in British articles and in the Annual Review written by the Foreign Office. The terrorist activity's perception was worsened by the lack of an effective Government—even the work of the General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, 'the flamboyant head of the Anti-Terrorist Brigade', seemed ineffective against the increasing terrorist attacks⁴⁴³. Terrorism in this year meant predominantly leftist assaults, but right-wing organizations were also active, although they did not dominate the newspaper headlines.

Even when in August 1980, a bomb placed by neo-Fascists blew up at Bologna Centrale railway station in Bologna, killing eighty-five people and injuring over two-hundred,

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Reuter and George Armstrong, "Sympathy Vote Favours Party Moro Denounced," *The Guardian*, May 17, 1978, 8.

⁴⁴² TNA, FCO 33-4048, Italian elections-aspects of campaign, despatch by Frontier, WRJ 014/2, 17 May 1979.

⁴⁴³ Frank Taylor, "Toll Grows in Italy Bored by Terror," *The Times*, March 19, 1979, 5.

this event was considered less significant than the series of attacks perpetrated against the establishment by the left-wing organizations⁴⁴⁴.

An article of 'The Times' appeared in 1981 with the headline 'A decade of terror under Red Brigades',⁴⁴⁵ was explanatory of the prominence achieved by the leftist terrorist organizations compared to their right-wing counterparts. Thus, over a decade the Italian background had completely overturned—the dominant position of the neo-Fascists in the British news described at the beginning of the paragraph was replaced by the total monopoly of the Red Brigades.

Nonetheless, a remarkable aspect is the trust the UK placed in the Italian country, despite of its critical conditions during the 1970s. There was not a single Annual Review by the Foreign Office, from 1978 on, that did not end with a final reference to the Italian ingenuity in coping with difficulties, whatever they were.

The British diplomatic Campbell, in his last Annual Review of Italy, dating back to the *annus horribilis*, commented that despite the dramatic events he found Italians in a better shape than the previous year, with the only exception of the Communists—which suffered from the unfavourable publicity of the Red Brigades and in that year lost their main interlocutor. Furthermore, the British press was not less confident about Italian society's ability to cheer itself up and oppose such a violence—'more than most other people, they understand that some consummation of political theory in the indeterminate future does not justify sickening cruelty now',⁴⁴⁶ Armstrong's comments on Italians' position after Moro's murder.

Paradoxically, reports from 1979 were less optimistic. The new British diplomat of the Foreign Office, Ronald Arculus, could hardly report something positive of the country in his review. The Italian society—'badly hit by terrorism and strikes'—was led by a Government dominated by uncertainty and instability⁴⁴⁷. In the Italian industries a tense climate was palpable: '[...] employers travel[ed] in protected cars and [took] security precautions, for they [were] liable to be knee-capped and kidnapped',⁴⁴⁸. Yet, Arculus commented that the Italian industry was actually dynamic and suggested that exporters

⁴⁴⁴ TNA, FCO 33-4897, Annual Review for 1980, report (75/81) by Arculus, WRJ 014/1, 7 January 1981.

⁴⁴⁵ Peter Nichols, "A Decade of Terror Under Red Brigades," *The Times*, December 19, 1981, 4.

⁴⁴⁶ George Armstrong, "Italy After the Moro Nightmare," 12.

⁴⁴⁷ TNA, FCO 33-4435, Annual Review for 1979, despatch (014/12) by Arculus, WRJ 014/1, 21 January 1980.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

from the UK should not be afraid of news coming from Italy—always reporting of a country ‘on the brink of economic, social and political chaos’—and venture more in the Italian business⁴⁴⁹.

At the beginning of the new decade, the situation in Italy did not improve, quite the opposite. The urban terrorism insistently kept on its activities and, it was assessed that it had the hallmarks of both the left-wing and right-wing organizations. Because of the perpetration of violence and the Government’s inability to cope with it, alongside with its perpetual instability, Italy gained the recognition of ‘sick society’⁴⁵⁰.

Yet, despite of the worried tone, Great Britain regarded the collapse of the democratic government an event remote to happen and acknowledged the importance Italy had internationally, especially in the Community context.

In conclusion, here are some representative words from the British diplomat Ronald Arculus which convey at the best Great Britain’s attitude towards Italy⁴⁵¹:

The new Russian Ambassador, Lunkov, said to me that he was going to find Rome uphill work after London. I said he was right. 1980 has been a bad year and the Italians are fed up with their politics as are the poor foreign ambassadors who try to interpret this Byzantine scene to their governments. Italy is in many respects a sick society. [...] There is a widespread feeling that the present system must be changed, but little sign of what Pertini calls disparagingly the ‘political classes’ being ready to do it. The prospects for 1981 are not bright. On the other hand the Italians have an extraordinary capacity for makeshift and survival. At all events, they remain of considerable importance to us in NATO and the EC. However patchy their performance in 1980 [...] we shall need them, for better or for worse, in 1981.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ TNA, FCO 33-4897, Annual Review for 1980, report (75/81) by Arculus, WRJ 014/1, 7 January 1981.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to show Britain's concern over law and order in Italy during the 1970s and point out London's attitude towards the Italian terrorist phenomenon.

In this decade, Italy experienced a period of political and social unrest, that worried its Western allies. The instability of its governments and the increasing popularity of the Italian Communist Party were considered an alarming threat by the American superpower.

When the PCI gained a considerable 34% in the 1976 general elections, the USA promoted drastic measures to hinder Communists' climb. In the Puerto Rico Summit in 1976, the heads of State of the USA, France, Germany and Great Britain met in order to discuss the 'Italian case'. Among conditions for international aids, the exclusion of the PCI from a coalition government was required.

Yet, Great Britain did not regard Italian Communists a serious problem and considered a 'Red Government' not even a remote possibility. Instead, what worried HMG was the increasing political violence that was erupting in the Italian society. The Italian terrorist phenomenon was an issue of considerable relevance for London, since it kept undermining an allied country that was already weak because of the economic and political crisis.

Despite the unsteady status of its domestic politics, Italy had an important role for Great Britain in the international context, especially in the European integration.

Italy actively supported the British membership of the EEC, for several reasons. Firstly, Great Britain could counterweight the dominant influence of France and West-Germany. Secondly, both of the two states aimed at levelling clear disparities in the Economic Community. The Common Agricultural Policy was the first target on their agenda, but it was a controversial issue because a change of it could undermine French profits. Yet, as it was conceived, the CAP costed to Italy and Great Britain more than they benefited. A further shared objective was the strengthening of the European funds to reduce the development gap among regional areas of the member States. For this purpose, Italy and Britain promoted the establishment of a Regional Development Fund. The close cooperation in reforming the Community, justifies the British concern for the increasing turmoil in Italy.

At the beginning of the decade, the British press reported on series of attacks carried out by far right-wing groups, which were suspected to be linked to the Italian Social Movement (MSI). According to the articles, the party's strategy was to create serious disorder, in order that the MSI could base its 1972 election campaign on the restoration of law and order. Originally, the violent upheaval was considered by the British articles as the outcome of heightened tension between right-wing and left-wing extremists, rather than an attempt at overthrowing the Italian political system.

The abduction and murder of the Christian Democracy's President Aldo Moro in 1978 changed the British opinion on political violence in Italy. Whereas the Red Brigades' activity was considered delirious by the Italian press, the British did not underestimate their danger. Despite the situation of law and order in Italy was serious, observers from Great Britain never regarded a coup d'état likely. Italians, according to them, had natural antibodies against authoritarian overthrow thanks to the recent experience of the Fascist period.

Positive comments were also shared by the British diplomats in Italy, who regarded Italians as resilient people that could tackle politic crisis and social problems thanks to their ingenuity. Their accounts on Italy, since the kidnapping of the Christian democratic President, always included reports on terrorism. Though worries were expressed about the worsening situation, the tone was never alarming. Instead, there was the desire to understand the origin of such a long-lasting phenomenon deeply imbedded in the society.

In conclusion, the interest of London in the political and social crisis in Italy was considerable. British officers and journalists provided Great Britain with detailed and clear-sighted accounts that went beyond prejudices. Though worries were constantly expressed, confidence in Italy's ability in tackling problems was never undermined.

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Riassunto in lingua italiana

L'Italia negli anni Settanta

L'Italia degli anni Settanta è stata oggetto di numerosi studi accademici; tuttavia l'attenzione degli studiosi si è focalizzata principalmente sulla politica interna e la storia culturale ed economica del paese, tralasciando il suo ruolo nel contesto internazionale di quegli anni. Eppure l'Italia non è stata unicamente un mero oggetto del sistema internazionale, bensì anche un attore attivo, in grado di influire nelle questioni mondiali dell'epoca.

Il ruolo internazionale del Paese si manifesta in quattro diverse dimensioni: nel conflitto della Guerra Fredda, il suo apporto nell'integrazione europea, la sua presenza al G7 e infine, il peso avuto nel contesto mediterraneo e nella questione del Medio-Oriente.

Per quanto riguarda la posizione italiana nel contesto della Guerra Fredda, il governo democristiano non ha mai messo in discussione la partecipazione dell'Italia al Patto Atlantico, e allo stesso modo l'alleanza del paese con gli Stati Uniti.

Tuttavia, la presenza del più grande e influente Partito Comunista dell'Europa Occidentale, rendeva l'Italia un caso difficile da gestire. Quando nel 1976 le elezioni politiche in Italia confermarono il supporto di cui godevano i comunisti, gli Stati Uniti ritennero urgente la convocazione di un incontro tra le quattro maggiori nazioni alleate per concordare una strategia comune di fronte al rischio di un governo con esponenti comunisti in un paese così strategico come l'Italia. Il summit di Puerto Rico del 1976 vide d'accordo gli USA, la Francia, la Repubblica Federale Tedesca e la Gran Bretagna—anche se quest'ultima mostrerà delle riserve—non solo nell'esclusione dei Comunisti dall'area di governo, ma anche nell'adozione da parte dell'Italia di determinate misure economiche, atte ad intervenire sui problemi strutturali dell'economia e della società italiana.

Il secondo ambito in cui il peso dell'Italia si è distinto è il processo dell'integrazione europea, che agli inizi degli anni Settanta vide l'ampliamento della Comunità Economica a Danimarca, Irlanda e Regno Unito. Riguardo quest'ultimo, l'Italia si dimostrò da subito sostenitrice della sua adesione alla Comunità, poiché riteneva che la presenza della Gran Bretagna avrebbe fornito un valido contrappeso al potere della Repubblica Federale Tedesca e della Francia. Inoltre, sin dai negoziati per l'ingresso del Regno Unito, le due nazioni stabilirono come obiettivo comune la promozione delle

politiche regionali, volte a limitare il divario tra zone sviluppate e aree rurali nei paesi membri; a tale scopo, si istituì il Fondo Europeo di sviluppo Regionale, il quale tuttavia subì costanti rallentamenti nel corso del decennio a causa di aspre dispute riguardo il suo finanziamento. Le polemiche investirono anche il progetto di riforma della Politica Agricola Comunitaria, CAP, fortemente voluto da Italia e Gran Bretagna.

Un ulteriore aspetto fondamentale del processo di integrazione fu l'istituzione del Sistema Monetario Europeo, lo SME, considerato il primo passo significativo verso l'unione monetaria ed economica europea. Inizialmente l'Italia aveva spalleggiato la Gran Bretagna nelle trattative per la sua introduzione, decidendo di non aderirvi quando questa fu discussa nel Consiglio Europeo del dicembre 1978. I motivi dietro questa decisione erano molteplici, riguardanti principalmente la politica interna del paese. Tuttavia, nella bilancia internazionale il peso maggiore propendeva verso l'adesione allo SME: considerando la crisi della distensione tra Washington e Mosca, l'adesione al Sistema Monetario avrebbe rafforzato la posizione dell'Italia all'interno dell'alleanza occidentale. Nonostante le resistenze, dunque, l'Italia aderì allo SME, il quale entrò in vigore il 13 Marzo 1979.

Il processo integrativo fu perseguito anche all'interno delle Istituzioni Europee, promuovendo sin dagli inizi degli anni Settanta, l'elezione diretta del Parlamento della Comunità Economica. L'atteggiamento della penisola nei confronti di questo aspetto si rivelò sempre coerente: l'Italia, infatti, aveva da sempre supportato il progetto di un'integrazione europea secondo principi federalisti, ritenendo che l'integrazione economica dovesse andare di pari passo a quella politica. Differentemente dall'approvazione dello SME, la ratifica del suffragio universale per il Parlamento europeo non trovò alcuna opposizione.

Al di fuori del contesto europeo, l'Italia dovette lottare per ottenere un riconoscimento all'interno delle iniziative dei quattro maggiori paesi industrializzati dell'Occidente. La sua situazione d'instabilità politica e d'incertezza economica la relegavano ad essere un oggetto isolato nel contesto dei summit tra USA, Repubblica Federale Tedesca, Francia e Gran Bretagna. Nel caso del summit di Rambouillet, il primo incontro economico tra i maggiori vertici occidentali, l'Italia dovette azionare la sua macchina diplomatica per poter garantire la sua partecipazione; un'eventuale esclusione dai vertici internazionali avrebbe gravemente minato una situazione già precaria. Fu la grave situazione in cui

versava la sua politica interna che convinse i maggiori paesi occidentali ad acconsentire alla partecipazione dell'Italia. Il crescente avanzamento del Partito Comunista, sancito dalle elezioni del giugno 1976, e la sua possibile partecipazione al governo italiano rappresentarono il controverso caso da discutere al Summit di Puerto Rico nell'estate dello stesso anno. In quell'occasione si vollero legare i problemi economici alle situazioni politiche, cosicché gli aiuti economici da destinare all'Italia fossero corrisposti solo in caso dell'esclusione dei Comunisti dall'area di governo.

Per compensare all'inefficace azione in ambito internazionale, il governo italiano concentrò i suoi sforzi verso i negoziati con i paesi del Mediterraneo e del Medio-Oriente. In questo contesto, si fece promotore di un progetto simile alla Conferenza sulla Sicurezza e la Cooperazione in Europa, con lo scopo di mantenere la pace e il progresso economico nei paesi di quest'area. Tuttavia, l'interconnessione tra la cooperazione con i paesi arabi e la questione palestinese rendeva difficoltosa ogni negoziazione. Nel contesto della Guerra dello Yom-Kippur, l'Italia si fece promotrice di un dialogo Euro-Arabo che non sortì gli effetti sperati, poiché gli arabi perseveravano ad associare alle trattative contenuti politici, laddove la Comunità Economica concepiva accordi relativi ai solo ambiti economici e culturali. Nonostante gli assidui tentativi del governo italiano di promuovere politiche coordinate tra i paesi membri della Comunità, le altre nazioni continuavano a muoversi individualmente. Inoltre, ogni tentativo di azioni comuni era radicalmente stigmatizzato dall'amministrazione statunitense, la quale temeva, così, uno scavalcamento del Patto Atlantico.

Come ogni azione in campo estero condotta dall'Italia nel corso di questo decennio, anche la politica sul Mediterraneo e Medio-Oriente fu compromessa dalle pressioni interne. A partire dal 1976, l'influenza di Washington divenne più persistente, cosicché ogni passo fu soppesato in base al volere degli Stati Uniti e delle categorie della Guerra Fredda, anche per quanto riguardava le questioni Mediterranee.

La Gran Bretagna negli anni Settanta

La Gran Bretagna degli anni Settanta, come l'Italia, affrontava una severa crisi economica congiunta a frequenti disordini: gli scioperi rappresentavano una costante e i sindacati godevano di un crescente potere. Sotto il governo di James Callaghan l'instabilità sociale si fece ingestibile, tanto che la fine del 1978 e l'inizio del 1979 passarono alla storia come 'the winter of discontent', l'inverno del malcontento.

Tali sollevazioni indebolirono la credibilità del paese in ambito internazionale, andando a minare delle relazioni da tempo consolidate; il rapporto con il suo 'special partner', gli Stati Uniti, ne fu un esempio.

Durante quello che venne definito dal segretario di Stato americano, Henry Kissinger, l' 'anno dell'Europa', l'amministrazione Nixon pose grande fiducia nel ruolo della Gran Bretagna, neo membro della Comunità Economica Europea. La rinnovata attenzione verso la Comunità Europea prevedeva, concretamente, la stesura di una rinnovata Carta Atlantica che avrebbe dotato gli alleati di una nuova Dichiarazione di Principi. Dietro questa mossa si celava, da parte statunitense, l'obiettivo di legare gli accordi economici con l'Europa alle questioni di sicurezza militare che costituivano i rapporti tra gli USA e la CEE. Questo nuovo sviluppo diplomatico era connesso con il recente ampliamento della Comunità alla Gran Bretagna, Irlanda e Danimarca: il loro ingresso permetteva la progettazione di accordi economici più ambiziosi, come ad esempio il Sistema Monetario Europeo, il quale, agli occhi degli Stati Uniti, rappresentava una seria minaccia all'economia americana.

L'amministrazione americana contava sul proprio 'partner speciale' per sviluppare la Dichiarazione di Principi, prevedendo una collaborazione esclusiva US-UK. La cooperazione a due fu rifiutata dal governo conservatore di Edward Heath, il quale preferì coinvolgere nelle trattative anche gli altri Stati membri della Comunità. Inoltre, il nuovo progetto della Dichiarazione dei Principi, così concepito, includeva una riforma monetaria che avrebbe minacciato la politica economica comunitaria. L'atteggiamento disfattista nei confronti delle proposte americane costò alla Gran Bretagna la fiducia dell'alleato. Tuttavia, questo non fu l'unico episodio che mise alla prova la relazione tra le due potenze: la crisi in Medio-Oriente, infatti, costituì un ulteriore terreno di scontro. La posizione di neutralità assunta dalla Gran Bretagna durante la guerra dello Yom Kippur nel 1973, irritò fortemente gli alleati americani, i quali da allora riconsiderarono l'entità della 'relazione speciale' con il Regno Unito. Da parte americana, si capì che il paese inglese avrebbe sempre anteposto l'unità della Comunità alla cooperazione con gli Stati Uniti, a meno che non fosse stata in aperta opposizione con i propri interessi.

I contatti tra i due paesi si intensificarono nuovamente nella seconda metà del decennio, quando il pericolo comunista iniziò ad affacciarsi nella sponda mediterranea dell'Europa, con la Rivoluzione dei Garofani in Portogallo e l'avanzata comunista in

Italia. L'amministrazione americana trovò nell'alleato inglese un interlocutore collaborativo, ma soprattutto un osservatore più lucido della situazione italiana. Sebbene l'analisi inglese fosse meno allarmistica di quella statunitense, e le continue ingerenze della superpotenza nella politica interna italiana lasciassero perplesso un paese liberal-democratico quale la Gran Bretagna, essa accettò di discutere il 'caso italiano' nel meeting di Rambouillet del 1975.

Le negoziazioni portate avanti all'interno della Comunità Economica furono altrettanto travagliate: a causa del veto posto dal Presidente francese Charles De Gaulle e di opposizione interne al Parlamento inglese, la Gran Bretagna dovette ritardare il suo ingresso nella CEE fino al 1973. Il suo ingresso fu salutato con favore soprattutto dall'Italia che vi vide un utile contrappeso all'eccessiva influenza franco-tedesca nelle sorti della Comunità. Tra Gran Bretagna e Italia vi era un generale accordo su diversi aspetti: dall'implemento della politica regionale comunitaria alla riforma delle istituzioni europee. Tuttavia le due nazioni non sempre assegnarono lo stesso peso ai progetti concordati: per quanto riguarda la riforma delle istituzioni, il punto di vista della Gran Bretagna fu sempre piuttosto prudente; prima di procedere al rafforzamento del Parlamento Comunitario, bisognava stabilirne i suoi confini, per non incorrere nel rischio di cedere un eccessivo potere. Una migliore distribuzione dei fondi monetari europei, assieme alla riforma della Politica Agricola Comune videro Gran Bretagna e Italia cooperare fianco a fianco, sebbene il loro esito non fu quello sperato a causa di circostanze contingenti la crisi Medio-Orientale.

Il progetto del Fondo Regionale e di riforma della Politica Agricola Comune non furono gli unici ambiti di collaborazione tra i due paesi nel contesto europeo. L'iniziativa del Sistema Monetario Europeo, lo SME, comportò numerose consultazioni tra Gran Bretagna e Italia; tali negoziazioni avrebbero potuto portare a dei successi significativi anche nei sopracitati progetti, se solo il dibattito non avesse avuto luogo durante un periodo cupo per entrambi i paesi.

Nonostante le sue condizioni di 'malato d'Europa', la Gran Bretagna fece parte delle quattro nazioni riunite per discutere le misure da imporre all'Italia per evitare che i Comunisti ricoprissero delle posizioni governative. Sebbene il governo britannico fosse preoccupato dalla possibilità di una partecipazione comunista all'esecutivo italiano, si dimostrò perplesso di fronte all'aperta interferenza dei maggiori paesi occidentali sulla

politica interna italiana. Secondo il punto di vista britannico, gli Usa, la Francia e la Repubblica Federale Tedesca avevano ideato un programma anacronistico, il quale comportava una riforma della politica sui redditi e tagli alla spesa pubblica, impossibili senza il coinvolgimento del Partito Comunista.

Violenza politica: una ricostruzione introduttiva delle Brigate Rosse

Il terrorismo interno si manifestò in Italia tra la fine degli anni Sessanta, protraendosi per l'intero decennio degli anni Settanta, con strascichi negli anni successivi.

Esso rappresentò un fenomeno peculiare, poiché non riconducibile ad un'unica matrice e perché profondamente radicato nella società italiana. Per quanto riguarda il primo aspetto, una prima distinzione possibile per catalogare tale fenomeno interessa la sua origine ideologica: il terrorismo 'nero' fu ispirato da un'origine neo-fascista, laddove il terrorismo 'rosso' presentò una matrice marxista-leninista. Il primo risale agli albori della Guerra Fredda ma le sue azioni erano sporadiche.

Per quanto riguarda il cosiddetto terrorismo 'rosso', l'organizzazione che monopolizzò la categoria, a partire dalla seconda metà degli anni Settanta, furono le Brigate Rosse. Infatti, sebbene fossero presenti una miriade di gruppi attivi nel decennio considerato, le Brigate Rosse si resero protagoniste di una serie di campagne terroristiche che ebbero come culmine l'attacco allo Stato italiano attraverso il rapimento e l'uccisione dell'allora Presidente della Democrazia Cristiana, Aldo Moro.

La loro fondazione, risalente all'agosto del 1970, avvenne ad opera di alcuni esponenti di Sinistra Proletaria e Collettivo politico metropolitano in provincia di Reggio Emilia, per rispondere all'esigenza di una maggiore coordinazione tra gruppi eversivi.

Nella strategia delle Brigate Rosse, le operazioni condotte dal gruppo si distribuirono in due principali fasi, caratterizzate ciascuna da un differente target: la prima fase, corrispondente al periodo iniziale dell'organizzazione, prevedeva attacchi rivolti agli impianti delle maggiori industrie del Nord Italia— Sit-Siemens, Pirelli, Alfa Romeo e FIAT—o ancora, rapimenti a danno dei dirigenti di tali imprese; la seconda fase, avviata a partire dal 1974, coincise con il rapimento del magistrato Mario Sossi, Pubblico Ministero al processo contro il gruppo sovversivo XXII Ottobre. Con tale sequestro ebbe inizio il cosiddetto 'attacco al cuore dello Stato' che avrebbe visto il suo pieno adempimento nel rapimento e uccisione del Presidente democristiano Aldo Moro, ritenuto responsabile della politica del 'compromesso storico', ovvero la collaborazione

tra il Partito Comunista e la Democrazia Cristiana per l'attuazione di un programma che potesse risanare l'economia e la società italiane.

L'insorgere della violenza politica: una prospettiva britannica

Il fenomeno terroristico italiano destò grande attenzione anche nell'alleato britannico, il quale, a partire dal 1978, anno dello sconvolgimento politico seguito al caso Moro, richiese ai propri diplomatici costanti aggiornamenti sulla situazione dell'ordine pubblico nella penisola.

Dalle analisi dei funzionari britannici emergeva uno scenario sicuramente grave, tuttavia privo degli allarmismi provenienti dalla diplomazia statunitense. Da parte di Londra si riscontrava l'intenzione di indagare le origini del fenomeno per poter comprendere una realtà che nel corso degli anni aveva mutato continuamente aspetto.

Dalle ricostruzioni effettuate grazie all'analisi degli articoli dei tre giornali britannici 'The Times', 'The Guardian' e 'The Observer' è possibile riscontrare una prima fase del terrorismo italiano di stampo neo-fascista. Tuttavia, inizialmente, gli scontri e i disordini di piazza venivano interpretati dalla stampa inglese più come il prodotto di tensioni politiche tra i gruppi estremisti della destra e della sinistra extra-parlamentare, piuttosto che come dei tentativi di sovvertire l'ordine democratico del paese. Ancora a metà degli anni Settanta, i movimenti neofascisti monopolizzavano il racconto della violenza: nei giornali di Londra essi erano i protagonisti e gli artefici dei disordini che infiammavano il paese; negli scontri, i riottosi di estrema sinistra, al contrario, venivano documentati come vittime innocenti della furia incontrollata neofascista. La narrazione della violenza politica muta a partire dal 1976, anno del primo processo ai capi storici delle Brigate Rosse che subirà continui slittamenti dovuti al rifiuto degli imputati ad avere dei difensori di ufficio e alle loro reiterate minacce ai membri della giuria. Da questo momento la stampa inglese metterà in primo piano le attività terroristiche dell'organizzazione di Mario Moretti, seguendone le sorti anche nel decennio successivo.

Il caso Moro fu seguito con profonda attenzione da Londra, e quando questo si concluse drammaticamente, le reazioni dal mondo anglosassone furono di stima nei confronti del governo italiano, il quale si dimostrò capace di reagire con fermezza agli attacchi terroristici contro le proprie istituzioni.

Nonostante il plauso per la risoluta gestione dell'accaduto, gli osservatori inglesi riconoscevano che il governo di unità nazionale costituito all'indomani del rapimento del Presidente democristiano, non possedeva solide basi per resistere.

Sebbene i resoconti dei diplomatici trasmettevano la gravità della situazione, i toni non risultarono mai allarmati: al contrario, veniva sempre fatto appello alla resilienza e ingegnosità del popolo italiano, confermando che non avrebbe ceduto alla minaccia terroristica.